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MADAME DE STAAL DE LAUNAY

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MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE STAAL DE LAUNAY

WRITTEN BY HERSELF

TRANSLATED BY

ŞELINA BATHURST

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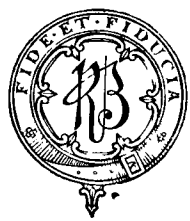

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PREFACE.

These memoirs were first published in 1755 *on the decease of the Duchesse du Maine, five years after the death of the writer, and when the Baron de Staal was still living. Another edition was issued in London in* 1767, *and in the present century they again appeared in a collection of old memoirs edited by Monsieur Barrière.*

Madame de Staal, or Mademoiselle de Launay as she styled herself before her marriage, was the daughter of a Monsieur Cordier who, for reasons now unknown, found it expedient to take up his abode in England, whither his wife reluctantly followed him: but preferring her native country, she soon returned to France and resumed her maiden name of de Launay, which she transmitted to her children. The youngest of these, the writer of these Memoirs, was born—as we are informed by Sainte-Beuve on the authority of Monsieur Ravenel—in the year 1684, *and was twenty-*

seven years of age when she entered the service of the Duchesse du Maine in the uncongenial position of waiting-maid.

It may be well to remind our readers that the Duchesse du Maine was a Princess of the quasi-royal family of Condé. She was a woman of ardent and aspiring nature, and being married to the legitimised son of Louis XIV. she was intent on maintaining her less ambitious husband in the position and rank of Prince of the Blood assigned to him by his father. In these attempts her most vehement opponent was her own nephew the Duc de Bourbon, whose name, for the sake of distinctness, we have taken the liberty of giving in full, although he was generally known as Monsieur le Duc, and is invariably so called by Madame de Staal. The Duke of Orleans, who had married the Duc du Maine's sister, was naturally less antagonistic to the claims of his wife's family; but conflicting interests and the ceaseless plotting of the Duchesse du Maine, soon obliged him to enforce stringent measures against the whole faction.

Apart from the episode with the Chevalier de Menil during their imprisonment in the Bastille, the hero of Mademoiselle de Launay's life was undoubtedly the Marquis de Silly, of whom contemporary accounts give less glowing portraits than we find in

these Memoirs. He is said to have been of a haughty and arrogant disposition; and after attaining the rank of Lieutenant Général des Armées du Roi, he put an end to his life by throwing himself out of a window in a paroxysm of mortified ambition.

Besides those already mentioned, many of the persons named in these pages were renowned in their own time and country, though well-nigh forgotten or totally unknown in these days and on this side of the Channel. Such are the Abbé de Vertot, the eminent historian; the Abbé de Chaulieu; Duvernay the anatomist; the Duc de Richelieu and the Marquis de Lassay, of whose varied matrimonial career M. Sainte-Beuve gives an amusing account in his 'Portraits Littéraires.' On a higher level stand Monsieur de Fontenelle, the long-lived author of the 'Pluralité des Mondes,' and Madame Dacier—the translator of Homer—whose widower Mademoiselle de Launay would have married, had not her usual hesitation delayed the ceremony until the death of the elderly bridegroom rendered her regrets unavailing.

The charm of style is inevitably lost in translation, and our readers must take it on credit that this was a point in which Madame de Staal was acknowledged to excel. Grimm, indeed, declared that, save the prose of M. de Voltaire, hers was the most agree-

able with which he was acquainted. Of her sparkling neatness of expression it is impossible to give an idea; and yet, in spite of this disadvantage and of Monsieur de Fontenelle's verdict that 'the book though pleasantly written, was not worth writing,' we still venture to hope that the present, slightly abridged, version may be welcomed as a description of times and manners now gone by, and a curious glimpse of prison life in the Bastille: that grim old fortress whose very name conjures up memories of tyranny and violence, while the tall column, which still marks its site, recalls the futile hopes of the maddened people who regarded its destruction as the prelude and the firstfruits of a happier age of tranquillity and freedom.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE STAAL.

I DO not flatter myself that the events of my life will ever deserve the attention of anyone; and, if I take the trouble of recording them, it is merely to amuse myself with the recollection of matters which have interested me.

My experience is exactly the reverse of what is seen in novels, where the heroine, brought up as an humble shepherdess, becomes an illustrious princess. In my childhood I was treated as a person of distinction, and in course of time I discovered that I was nobody, and that nothing in the world belonged to me. My mind not having taken the turn that it ought to have received from adversity, has always resisted the state of degradation and subjection in which I found myself, and this has caused the misery of my life.

For some reason, which I have never known, my father was obliged to leave France, and settle in England. My mother was young and beautiful. Her confessors reproached her for living apart from her husband, and she went to join him; but soon becoming weary of a foreign country, she returned to France a short time before my birth, which took place at Paris. Being destitute of the means of living there, she sought and found a refuge in the Abbey of St. Sauveur d'Evreux, in Normandy. Through the intercession of some friends, Madame de la Rochefoucault, who was the abbess, received her without payment; and when it became necessary to take me from my nurse, she allowed my mother to fetch me and bring me with her to the convent.

A short time before, the king, Louis XIV., had wished to appropriate the right of nomination to the abbeys of the Urbanists; the Pope disputed the point, and, the struggle being protracted, the nuns appointed to these abbeys, having left their own convents to take possession, refused to return to them, and while awaiting the result, sought refuge in their religious houses.

Mesdames de Grieu, of the Abbey of Jouarre, who were among the claimants, had retired to St. Sauveur, where my mother formed a great friendship with them, and from the first moment

of my arrival those ladies took a violent affection for me. Their want of occupation in a strange house gave them a sense of weariness that confers a charm on the first object encountered; and they loved me with the vehemence with which solitude and idleness are wont to invest every kind of feeling.

I was little more than two years old, and I already made little speeches which were reckoned witticisms for my age. I gained the good graces of the abbess by an incident which is perhaps too trivial to relate. She was the sister of the Duc de la Rochefoucault, so famous for his talents, and she was clever too; but talents are no bar to whims, and only render them more strange. She had established in her house an asylum for unfortunate dogs; the maimed and incurable filled her apartments; some were epileptic, others were covered with mange. She did not trouble herself about those that were healthy and handsome; they were sure to have plenty of other resources. I was often in her rooms with Mesdames de Grieu. One day, in sitting down to dinner, I heedlessly trod on the foot of one of these unfortunate creatures, which forthwith yelled vociferously. The abbess's countenance changed, and she seemed so much irritated that I was desired, in a whisper, to beg pardon. As it did not occur to me that she was the person aggrieved,

I rose from table, and, falling on my knees in the middle of the room before the wounded dog, offered a very touching apology. This action was successful and reinstated me in her favour. Her sister, the Marquise de Silleri, and her nieces Mesdames de Saint Poin and de Boisfevrier, all very clever women, took pleasure in talking to me. I really had more intelligence and sense than is usual at that age; and this may be said without vanity, for children who are reckoned prodigies of cleverness sometimes turn out prodigies of folly.

This happy disposition was cultivated by all the instruction of which my age was susceptible. I lived only with grown-up people, and that gives a rational turn to the mind. They knew enough to explain all that I wanted to know. One curiosity satisfied gave birth to another; I was always asking questions and I always received an answer. Instead of being lulled to sleep with foolish fictions, the rudiments of sacred and profane history were instilled into me, and were so aptly received that I used to make appropriate quotations. This educational success rendered those who were concerned in it more devoted to me than ever. They besought my mother to entrust me entirely to their care.

Having been offered the situation of governess to the only daughter of the Duchesse de Ventadour,

my mother accepted the proposal on honourable and advantageous terms; but her extreme piety was incompatible with her new mode of life, and still more so with the tastes of her pupil, and she was therefore induced to leave, without even waiting for the marriage of Mademoiselle de Ventadour, which took place soon after, with the Prince de Turenne.

At the end of a year, my mother returned to the convent in which I had been left under the charge of the ladies who had taken possession of me, and who had now become so much attached to me that they refused to give me up. They considered me as their child, and my education was their only occupation.

This violent affection made them wish for a situation which would enable them to do more for my benefit, and they employed some small interest which they possessed at Court to obtain an abbey. The plan was discussed a long time before it was realised. I predicted that it would not be until I was seven years old. Fools and children sometimes prophesy correctly, for they often talk at random. It is a great event in a convent when a nun becomes an abbess. Negotiations tending to this object are watched on all sides. The hopes of Mesdames de Grieu were suspected, and, as it was believed that they withheld no secrets from me, I was questioned.

I made nonsensical replies; I talked of my doll; in short, I persuaded my interrogators that I was too childish to be trusted, and I kept the secret without having violated the truth. I had not learnt to tell falsehoods; accustomed to find the avowal of my faults a sufficient excuse for them, I had no inducement to prevaricate. It is the harshness and constraint exercised towards children which force the greater number to become hypocrites and liars.

Madame de Grieu, the eldest of the two sisters, was at last appointed to the Priory of St. Louis, at Rouen. She soon afterwards set off to go there with her sister, and took me with her by the permission of my mother, who, being sufficiently perplexed how to dispose of herself, was glad to be relieved of me. These ladies stopped on the way to visit one of their brothers, who lived on a pretty estate in that neighbourhood. I was delighted to go, and to see something new; the world was enlarging before my eyes, and I was still more delighted to arrive at St. Louis. Soon afterwards I heard of the death of my father, who had remained in England. I had never seen him, and I do not know that I was conscious of having a father; nevertheless I bestowed a few tears upon him, though I do not remember whence they came from.

The convent of St. Louis was like a small state, in which I reigned as sovereign. The abbess and

her sister thought only of forestalling my wishes and gratifying my whims. I was lodged in the abbess's apartment, which was pleasant and comfortable. Four people, nuns and lay sisters, were employed to wait upon me, and were fully occupied by the number and variety of my behests. We have many wants when we are under no restraint. The abbess's nieces, whom, out of deference for her family, she had taken with her, were obliged to toady me, although much to their disgust, and all the house was forced to pay me a sort of court. As everybody I saw was subject to me, I did not consider it necessary to show the slightest complaisance to anyone, not even to the ladies whose blind affection had erected this little empire for me.

An annuity which they received from their family was spent in paying masters for me, and in providing me with all that was necessary or agreeable. They deprived themselves of everything that I might lack nothing.

It is true I loved them dearly, but it was without knowing how great were my obligations to them. What was done for my behoof cost me so little that it seemed in the natural order of things. It is only from our own efforts to obtain a thing that we learn its value. In short, though unspeakably small, I had acquired all the faults of the great. This has since taught me to excuse similar defects in

them, and has shown me how easily we persuade ourselves that everything is made for us.

This extreme indulgence to my faults would have made them degenerate into vices had I not happily possessed a good natural disposition, and if the religious devotion which I cherished from my earliest years had not repressed my nascent passions before they had acquired strength. Religion was the only great object that I had in view; I was well versed in it, and my intellect was so precocious that I was allowed to participate in its most holy mysteries before I was eight years old. This premature favour increased my power. I was fond of reading. The convent library contained little save books of devotion; I read them constantly, and I spent the rest of my time in prayers or meditations. It was feared that my health might suffer, for it was very delicate, and an attempt was made to repress my enthusiasm. The constraint, hitherto unknown to me, rendered my ardour still more fervent. I used to make my escape, and spend in devotional exercises the hours which were supposed to be employed in amusement. With these I mingled a few light studies. For some years I was so much absorbed in these occupations that, grudging the time otherwise employed, I had my hair cut short, in order to be dressed the quicker; it was remarkable for its length, and it was then the custom to

wear it long. Women cleave to their attractions even more than to their passions ; and my passion for reading could not preserve me from a keen feeling of regret for this sacrifice. I thus learnt that it was possible to repent. This experience abated my ardour for becoming a nun. Until then I had impatiently looked forward to that moment. I began to feel the consequences of an engagement that cannot be broken, and between that time and the age for taking the veil, my vocation diminished so much that I scarcely gave it a thought.

There were some boarders in my convent who were much older than myself. I formed an attachment for some of them, and this afforded a little diversion from my more serious occupations. They lent me novels, which made so great an impression on my mind that I have not been so much agitated by the adventures that have since befallen myself as I was then by those of these fictitious personages. The great liberty allowed me, did not prevent my actions from being watched, and as I concealed nothing it was easy to be aware of my conduct. It was thereupon known that I was reading dangerous books, and I was desired to give them up. I obeyed so implicitly that, having stopped in the very middle of an incident which perturbed me greatly, I would not even look at the end, and although I was entreated to finish it in secret, I steadfastly

resisted. I have done few things that cost me so much. Still the idea of the passions made an impression upon me, and the sentiments which gave rise to them insinuated themselves into my mind without any definite object. Mademoiselle de Silly, whom I had seen in my childhood at St. Sauveur, where she had spent some time, came to live at St. Louis. She was an amiable person, sensible, and of a cultivated mind; guided by her opinions more than by her feelings; of a firm and decided character. To her, I attached myself with all the vehemence of a first affection. My only thought was how to please her; her tastes became mine; she liked reading, and I read all day by her side. Till then, I had never found any books capable of exciting or satisfying my curiosity. I have often since regretted the loss of five or six years, those best suited for the cultivation of the mind, which I passed in learning nothing but what is usually taught to young girls, such as music, dancing, and playing on the harpsichord, for all of which I had neither taste nor talent, and in which I made no progress.

My abbess and her sister had given me all the education that a child is capable of receiving, but they had not the means of taking me any further, and I had stopped half-way, when a new field was opened to me by Mademoiselle de Silly. She was

studying Descartes' Philosophy, and I devoted myself to this undertaking with extreme delight. I next read with her 'La Recherche de la Vérité,' and became an enthusiastic admirer of the author's system. To ascertain whether I understood it, I set myself to foresee the consequences of his principles, and I seldom failed to find them. This led me to suppose that I understood him. It is possible that an entirely fresh mind, imbued with no opinions, may receive abstract ideas more readily than one already full of various thoughts which are apt to hamper one another. It is also true that the passion for knowledge is more keen when one has not yet experienced any other, and attention is more complete at an age in which it is not divided by cares and business.

I felt so much pleasure in this supposed discovery of the truth, that I could not bear anything that diverted me from it. Ordinary amusements and society were distasteful to me, and nothing pleased me but study and conversations bearing upon this subject. However, by dint of thinking, I came upon disquieting thoughts. I feared that philosophy might disturb belief; that these metaphysical ideas were nourishment too strong for a mind as yet little capable of digesting them, and in the very climax of my passion, I removed its object until I should be able to devote myself to it without danger. This sacrifice cost me a great deal, but I had early accus-

tomed myself to self-control, and to decide against my taste in matters that seemed doubtful, being assured that I was less likely to be mistaken on this than on the opposite side.

Mademoiselle de Silly, whom I consulted, approved of my resolution. No thought occurred to me which I did not impart to her. I loved her as one loves oneself, and, as it seemed to me, yet more. I would have borne the ills intended for her in order to save her from them; in short, I went so far as to take a dislike to people who appeared to respect and like me more than her.

This first affection, extreme as it was, did not prevent me from experiencing a slight attack of a more ordinary sentiment. A brother of my abbess, with his niece, and a man in love with this niece, came to spend some time outside the convent. This was a new sight for me. I perceived their mutual understanding at the first words that fell from them in my presence, although the subject was something quite indifferent. I gave myself great credit for this discovery, and, wishing to follow it up, I devoted to all their doings an attention beyond ordinary curiosity. I communicated all my observations to Mademoiselle de Silly, and, as she had more worldly experience than I had, she recognised at once the sort of interest that I felt. She did not wish to unfold to me this piece of knowledge, which is often

dangerous, for a feeling of which the nature is unknown may be neglected, and may vanish of itself, whereas a sentiment which rouses alarm, and which one resolves to combat, impresses itself more deeply on the imagination, and is difficult to efface.

Still the melancholy which overcame me after the departure of this party made me aware that I was touched by the fascinations, moderate as they were, of the Chevalier de R——, who played the principal part. Every particular, from his appearance and the words he had uttered, to his pieces on the lute, which he played to perfection, were never absent from my mind. I confided my trouble to Mademoiselle de Silly. She confessed that she had perceived it sooner than I had, advised me not to be alarmed, and not to watch myself too closely, as she was sure that the evil is often increased by the attention bestowed upon it. And in truth I added imaginary sentiments, derived from novels, to whatever reality there might be in this first inclination, which was certainly not strong, as it could not stand the idea of an indissoluble union. Of this Mademoiselle de Silly made a skilful use to cure me of what she considered a merè fancy. She represented this goal as a sort of possibility. At first I was surprised, I pondered deeply, and, after spending the night in great agitation, I found on awakening that the charm

had disappeared, my mind was tranquil, and my heart disengaged; and I thought no more of this adventure save to laugh over it with Mademoiselle de Silly, who had so successfully rescued me. I saw this individual, a long time afterwards, despoiled of all the charms conferred on him by illusion. He was scarcely recognisable; and nothing remained to me of the impression he had made save a peculiar taste for the lute and the guitar.

Before this slight essay of my own sentiments, I had inspired some lively feelings in a man of considerable talent, whom a legal formality had obliged to enter my convent on several successive days. He conversed with me for some time, and was surprised to find a girl of only thirteen or fourteen years old with acquirements unusual at that age. Monsieur Brunel—for such was his name—wished to keep up some communication with me, and for this purpose he begged Mademoiselle de Silly, who was already charmed with his conversation, to allow him to visit her. She willingly consented, and as we were inseparable he saw me at the same time. He gradually acquired the habit of spending every afternoon in our parlour, and set up a sort of flirtation divided pretty equally between Mademoiselle de Silly and me. I saw, however, that the balance leant to my side, and that in the verses which he

made for us, those addressed to me were more tender and more natural.

I was immensely amused with his society. M. Brunel had great discernment, and all that knowledge which is an ornament to the mind. He lacked only those graces which are acquired in the intercourse of society, and which are nevertheless more apt to please than more solid advantages. I had no liking for him, but I was flattered at his liking me. The first conquests and the last are those which afford the greatest pleasure. In extreme youth it is something to please so soon, and it is a great deal to please still when one is at the turn of life. This affair occupied me, without touching my heart. I took pains to analyse what M. Brunel thought of me. But whenever he became too explicit, whenever he seemed to expect some return, I took an aversion to him; for it is a fact that the heart does not fail to rebel against all the demands that it does not spontaneously forestall. But, indifferent as M. Brunel was to me, I was piqued to find that he had an old mistress, with whom he passed a portion of his life. This discovery excited my imagination enough to give rise to the first verses I ever produced. They were very ironical, without rule or measure, for I knew not how to make them. He made a gallant reply, and my anger was appeased; it caused no jealousy

nor anything appertaining to a passion; nor had I any for the man in question. The bond between us lasted to the end of his life, which occurred a short time after I left the country. His death caused me a regret which still continues, and will last as long as I live.

Mademoiselle de Silly, my inseparable friend, was obliged to make a journey to Paris. Her absence, although it was to be short, caused me a distress surpassing any I had yet experienced. I had recourse to a new occupation to rouse myself from the state of annihilation in which her loss had plunged me. In my early studies I had noticed the inconvenience of not knowing a little geometry, and I retained the desire to learn something of it. Urged by the necessity of absorbing my mind with ideas which would occupy it entirely, I resolved on seizing the present moment. I therefore gave myself up to this study, and found it a useful diversion. The best means of calming mental troubles is not to combat the object which causes them, but to occupy the mind with other thoughts and thus divert it gradually. I profited by this observation a long time afterwards on an occasion of another kind.

The convent of St. Louis had been almost ruined when Madame de Grieu became its abbess, and a sort of famine, which desolated France some years later, reduced the house to a state of utter

destitution. The ill-fed nuns angrily scrutinised an outlay which they held to be at their expense. The abbess and her sister received annuities from their own family, but this was not deemed sufficient for the support of their nieces, and still less for all that was done for me. I became the object of murmurs, which went so far as to inspire the Archbishop of Rouen, Monsieur Colbert, with the desire of destroying the house, or at least of obliging the abbess to leave it. He made his visitation, listened to the complaints, and decided that Madame de Grieu must either resign her abbey or rid herself of me and her nieces. It was only by restraining my agitation by a vigorous application to abstract subjects that I was able to bear even the suspense of waiting for this verdict. I believe by accustoming oneself to it at an early age it would be easy to employ this means, and to convert it into a habit, and that we might thus save ourselves from the useless torments of anxiety.

After the archbishop's visit I learnt his decision. The abbess and her sister were in despair. Their distress prevented me from feeling my own. At last, having discussed the alterations with her sister and me, as well as with Mademoiselle de Silly, who had long since returned to St. Louis, the abbess determined to proffer her resignation of the temporal administration of the house, after having proved the

rectitude of her conduct by giving in her accounts, and to undertake to live with her sister, her nieces, and me, on the allowance derived from her own family, without drawing any of her salary. This was the last expedient for keeping me with her without suspicion of being a charge upon the convent. But to attain this object, many negotiations were required. The archbishop had appointed a Superior, the Abbé de Gouey; he constantly wrote to the abbess; it was necessary to answer him, and to write a great many other letters, which greatly embarrassed her. She confided this task to me; and I think that the wish to succeed taught me to write with a sort of dexterity requisite for dealing with matters of this description. These letters were approved of by her friends and advisers; she gained her object, I remained with her, and she was tormented no more.

Several years thus passed quietly enough. At last I had the sorrow of being separated from Mademoiselle de Silly, who returned to her father's home in Lower Normandy. This was a severe affliction, and made a great void in my life. My passion for study had slackened since I had perceived that the Truth sought after, vanishes just as we expect to seize it. I still liked reading as a useful and agreeable occupation, but I no longer gave it credit for advantages which it does not possess, and every

passion is extinguished when we see the object as it really is.

I had the small-pox soon after Mademoiselle de Silly's departure. I was as ill as it was possible to be without dying. I did not disquiet myself for either my life or my peace, which was little worthy of consideration. I merely felt the illness itself. It did not prevent my taking care to be removed, so as to endanger no one else. I had already perceived that in ethics, as well as in geometry, the whole is greater than its part. I willingly prepared myself for death. Yet when I had recovered, I had the weakness to dread seeing my face, little as I troubled myself about it; and it was only at the end of three or four months that I accidentally encountered it, having by that time lost all recollection of it. The women who think least of their attractions, and who seem not to heed them, care for them, nevertheless, far more than they imagine.

I was more inclined for society since my passion for reading had diminished. I made an agreeable friendship with the Demoiselles d'Epinay, who came to live at St. Louis for some time, and invited me, when they had left, to visit them at the house of an aunt with whom they lodged. They had an uncle, a maker of verses good and bad, some of which he addressed to me, and I responded in kind. Monsieur de Rey, a friend of these young ladies,

took a great affection for me. I was touched, as one always is by finding oneself attractive; but what I afterwards learnt of the generosity of his sentiments inspired me with a peculiar esteem for him.

My abbess fell dangerously ill, and this illness led me to reflect seriously on my position. I had nothing of my own, and she could leave me nothing. I saw no resource except to become a nun, and I had lost all fancy for the vocation; moreover, to be a nun, I should have been obliged to accept the offer of a dowry, from a lady to whom I did not wish to be under obligations, for the abbess of St. Louis had not sufficient power in her own house to have me received without a fortune, and the state of the convent precluded any proposition of the sort.

One day, when I was entirely occupied with these ideas, and was discussing them with the Demoiselles d'Epinay, who were sufficiently interested in me to deserve my confidence, M. de Rey came in and interrupted our conversation. He noticed my distress, and when I was gone he pressed them to disclose the cause of it. They confided to him that I was deploring the necessity of becoming a nun owing to the want of fortune. He was deeply struck by this conversation, and came to see me the next day. He told me that he had heard my resolution; that he conjured me not to make myself miserable for

life, but rather to acquiesce in the plan he wished to arrange for me; that, being married, he could not make me an offer of himself, but that he would secure to me sufficient means to live as I chose and where I chose; and that, to prove that he did not wish to take any advantage of the benefit which he was able and anxious to confer upon me, he would agree never to see me again if I should insist on this condition. I was surprised at the proposal, and I saw nothing very clearly but the refusal I was to give it. There was as yet no true moderation in my feelings or in my way of seeing things. I was almost affronted at what afterwards appeared to me highly worthy of esteem and gratitude, although I have not changed my mind as to the course to be taken.

The abbess fortunately recovered from her illness, and I determined not to think of my future prospects until I was deprived of the resources that I found in her affection.

From another quarter, also, I received generous offers, which I met with like disdain. M. Brunel had introduced to me, as one of his friends, the Abbé de Vertot, who was passing through Rouen. He was a man of exceedingly lively imagination. I do not know under what aspect he saw me, but he was at once seized with a violent fancy for me. He descanted upon my merits to the booksellers from whom he bought books. As I felt no distrust for

his interest in my concerns, I talked to him with great openness of my situation and my future want of means. This put it into his head to settle on himself and me a sum of money with which he had intended to purchase a life annuity. He mentioned this plan to some of my friends, who advised me to accept the offer, but I refused. I had early made up my mind to poverty, and I considered it less objectionable than placing myself under any suspicious obligation. I afterwards recognised all the characteristics of love in the feelings of the said abbé, and especially in his opinion of my perfections. When he described me to myself with all the traits of his brilliant imagination, I used to say, 'Some day you will see me as I am, and you will be very much surprised.' His attentions, although restrained by the proprieties due to his position and his age, and by the respect prompted by a true desire to please, were too marked not to annoy me. Thus he succeeded only in inspiring a repugnance which I should not have felt, had he never shown any liking for me.

An unexpected incident brought me into communication with Mademoiselle de Silly, who was always essential to my happiness. Her mother came to Rouen for a lawsuit, and brought her with her. I was delighted to see her again, and still more enchanted at her proposal to take me back to

Silly to spend some time there, with the consent of her mother, who seemed to wish it very much. My abbess and her sister, although they could not bear me to be away from them, offered no resistance, being always delighted to purchase my pleasure at the expense of their own.

I set off with the greatest glee in the company of a friend whom I still loved tenderly. Her mother was cold but civil, and I soon grew accustomed to her. I arrived at a moderately handsome château, somewhat melancholy and old, as was the master of the house, whose manner was extremely dry. I soon won his good graces, however, as well as those of his wife, who was equally ungenial, and they made me welcome as long as I was willing to stay.

Scarcely anyone came to the house. The old Marquis de Silly disliked expense, and the marquise, who was very devout, did not care for society. I had only seen there a few gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who had not attracted my attention, when the Chevalier d'Herb . . . came to pay a visit. They made him play a game of ombre, after which he went away, promising to come back and pay a longer visit. I perceived that I wished him to return. I tried to discover the reason; I said to myself that he was a man of intellect, and agreeable in society, who would naturally be welcome in a place so solitary; and then examining the grounds on which I

had founded my opinion of his talents, and carefully calling to mind what I had heard him say, I could remember nothing but 'gano, three matadors, and without taking.' When he returned and talked more, the intellect that I had gratuitously ascribed to him disappeared, and nothing remained but an agreeable tone of voice, which he really had, and a little more of the manners of the world than I was accustomed to meet with.

He often came without being invited, and stayed a long time, when no effort was made to keep him, whence we concluded (Mademoiselle de Silly and I) that one of us must have captivated him, but it was not easy to discover on which, his choice had fallen. I bet upon her, and she bet upon me, and it became an excitement to us to find out to whom this conquest belonged. The excitement was certainly small, but in solitude small things become inflated, like objects placed in an air-pump. This dispute was only a joke between us. The observations made in consequence, which we accurately reported to each other, became an occupation in our idleness. Still, when I found that he had declared himself, and that it was not for me, I experienced a vexation hitherto unknown. It was followed by more violent sensations, which caused me the sort of terror that one undergoes on feeling that one is falling into an abyss of which the bottom is unseen. It was jealousy with

all its appurtenances, and is the only attack I ever had of it, although occasions have not been wanting in circumstances much more fitted to arouse it. What gave a point to my despair, was the small value of my object. But this absence of illusion was a great advantage to me, for if it did not prevent the violence of the melancholy, it shortened its duration. No traces were left of this absurd adventure but the recollection that one preserves of something strange.

I should have suppressed it had I been writing a novel. I am aware that a heroine ought to have but one love, that it ought to be for a perfect being, and never end; but reality makes shift as it can, and has no other merit than in being what it is. Its eccentricities are often more agreeable than the constant symmetry found in works of art.

After having spent five or six months at Silly I was obliged to return to my convent. My friends made me promise to come back the following year. The Marquise de Silly pressed me to do so all the more as she expected her son to spend the summer there, and she wished to provide him with society likely to render a sojourn in the country endurable to him. He had been made prisoner at the battle of Hochste, and taken to England. The air of that country having affected his lungs he was obliged to return to France on parole, and the Parisian doctors

advised him to go to Normandy to breathe his native air. M. de Silly had spent his life in the great world, and on a most agreeable footing. I had heard so much of him that I had the greatest curiosity to make his acquaintance.

On my return I was received in my convent with extreme joy. I lived there as usual with my friends, M. Brunel, the Demoiselles d'Epinay, and Monsieur de Rey, who still showed me great affection. From small indications, however, I discovered some abatement of his feelings. I often went to visit the Demoiselles d'Epinay, with whom he spent most of his time. As they lived very near the convent I generally returned on foot, and he never failed to escort me home. There was a large square to cross, and at the beginning of our acquaintance he took his way along the sides of this square. I now perceived that he went across the middle, whence I concluded that his love had diminished by the difference between the diagonal and the sides of the square.

I impatiently awaited the time for returning to Silly, although my devotion to my old friend had become a little less ardent since the painful sensations I had experienced on her account. At last, when the time came, I returned there. The son of the house was expected; everything was full of him already. He arrived; everyone went to receive him, I like the rest, but not quite so quickly, and when I joined

the others he was already on the stairs going to his room. He turned to give some order. I was struck by his agreeable countenance, and a certain noble air quite different from anything I had yet seen. He was unsociable with all, and at first spoke little to anybody. Some books that he had brought with him were his only companions. He stayed in his room, went out walking by himself, and, except at the hours of meals, he was scarcely to be seen. Still, although he troubled himself little with conversation, he spoke so well and with so much grace, that his talents were manifest without any effort to display them.

His fascinations and his neglectful manner piqued me extremely. His sister, who had seen him more sociable, was as much hurt as I was, and his indifference became our usual subject of conversation. One day, when we were walking in the wood, and thought ourselves alone, we gave full vent to our wrath. He was very near us, although we had not noticed him, and, perceiving that we were talking of him, he stopped to listen. We were seated; he concealed himself behind the trees, and lost nothing of our conversation. It was animated by various passions; he considered it worthy of his attention, and felt that we had reason to complain of a contempt which we did not deserve. He did not show himself, but when we had returned to the house he told us that he had

heard himself spoken of, that a great deal had been said against him, and that it had not been said in joke. 'One is not likely to joke,' said I, 'when you are the subject of complaint.' This ingenuous answer gratified him. 'I did not expect,' he replied, looking at me, 'to find in the valley of the Auge what I have found there.' And then he confessed what pleasure our conversation had given him, although he certainly had not been spared. From that moment he considered us worthy of his society, and henceforth he never left us. Walks and reading were all in common. I spent whole days with a person who captivated me beyond measure, and whom I did not think of captivating. It seemed to me impossible that a man accustomed to live with the most charming women, and to be liked by them, could have the smallest thought of me, destitute as I was of beauty and the fascinations given by the habits of the world. Yet I had the happiness of constantly seeing one whose mere presence was a delight to me. I was listened to, and even applauded by him, and in a manner so delicate as to flatter my vanity without offending my modesty. And even since I have seen the world I have never met anyone who possessed this art to the same degree as M. de Silly. He seemed, and he really was, so deeply impressed by the things that pleased him, that they were never obliterated from his memory. He has often recalled

to me expressions that I had used many years before.

It was so much the custom of the house to think of nothing but him, that I was able to indulge my inclination without rendering myself remarkable. Occasionally, however, I was guilty of acts so marked as to be unmistakable. Among others, having given him a purse that had been sent me from my convent, he threw his own to a maid of his mother's, who was not one of the least devoted to him, and whether to get the purse myself, or to prevent her from having it, I caught it in the air before it reached her, and this in the presence of the Marquise de Silly, one of the gravest and most severe of women. The sentiment which imprinted these little incidents on my memory has preserved my remembrance of them.

I was young rather from my want of experience than from the number of my years. But I had never been in love; for the first fancy that I had taken at fourteen or fifteen years of age was merely the effect of romantic ideas that made me wish to have a love affair in order to become, as it seemed to me, a more important personage. The fit of jealousy that I afterwards experienced, was merely the mortification of pride humiliated on all points. It in no way resembled the feelings which now overcame me. I know not how it was that I never thought of

repressing them. They seemed without danger, as they would be unrequited, and my only wish was to conceal them effectually.

The fear of compromising himself, or of giving me occasion for an explanation, made M. de Silly careful not to find himself alone with me. I was quite resolved not to say anything to him, and yet I passionately desired the meeting that he so studiously avoided. When I had discovered the motive of his precautions my desire became the more eager to have some private conversation with him in order to reassure his mind, and prove how far I was from forgetting what was due to myself. At last I had this satisfaction. One day, when we were about to take our usual walk, Mademoiselle de Silly was indisposed, and declined to go. The mother, who thought only of her son's amusement, desired me to accompany him. There was no means of escape. We walked a considerable distance across a large meadow. This small triumph gave me courage to speak. First I descanted on the beauty of the country, but this not being far enough from the subjects that I wished to avoid, I mounted from earth to heaven, and launched out upon the system of the world. I adhered steadfastly to this exalted theme until we rejoined the party on our return to the house. M. de Silly, relieved from anxiety, had willingly adapted himself to the conversation, of which

the subject, grave as it was, had been lightly handled. I gained this advantage, that he saw that I knew both how to speak and how to keep silence. Moreover, I enjoyed the ineffable happiness known only to those who are capable of resisting the impulses of their hearts.

After this M. de Silly avoided me no more. I did not fly from him, and we frequently met. He seemed delighted to talk to me, and made me conscious of a most gratifying esteem. To this he added a tender interest in all that concerned me. I felt the proof of it in small pieces of advice that he volunteered to give me. In short, I found in him everything I could wish save the love which, it seemed to me, I did not desire. It was pleasant to love without fear and without resistance, sheltered from any weakness, and with no care but that of disguising my feelings; and I have no doubt that a man so intelligent and so much accustomed to gallantry as M. de Silly was perfectly aware of what I thought of him, and perhaps more so than I was myself. It is true he never allowed me to perceive that he had noticed it, not even subsequently when we lived in confidential intimacy. It was only long afterwards that I knew from his sister that he was tempted to become attached to me, but that, foreseeing that the attachment would not be eternal, he was restrained by the respect with which I inspired him, and the melan-

choly fate that he would otherwise prepare for me. He sometimes used to exclaim, 'Oh, how I should hate anyone wicked enough to deceive you!'

Mademoiselle D——, who had lived in the convent of St. Louis with Mademoiselle de Silly and me, was then at a place half a league from our house. She was invited to come and see us. She came. The long stay she had made at several German Courts, and in England, afforded subjects of conversation with M. de Silly, who had so lately returned to his own country. He seemed to take pleasure in her society. She was pressed to remain, and she stayed some days with us. The fascinations of M. de Silly speedily made upon her all the impression that might be expected. He was not exempt from the coquetry common in agreeable people, and although this young lady was ugly and only moderately intelligent, he amused himself with his conquest, and neglected no means of assuring it. Less cautious with her than with me, he put in practice the usual canons of gallantry. I witnessed this with so much tranquillity that I am still at a loss to understand how, having felt the horrors of jealousy for a person I valued so little, I could now be exempt from it, if it be not that this passion is more intimately connected with vanity than with love; and that, not imagining that I could have any weight in the balance carried off by Mademoiselle D——, my honour was not con-

cerned. This affair was of so little importance in my estimation, that the young lady having gone home and resisted all invitations to return, I went to fetch her, and brought her back with me, delighted thus to refute the interpretation which many, less discreet, might have given to my feelings. I was delighted, moreover, to see the fascinations which had captivated me producing the same effect on all sides. The excuse for not having escaped was that the subjugation was inevitable. There is so little consistency in the effects of the passions, that while I was thus feigning indifference, I was annoyed by the smallest attention that M. de Silly paid to anyone whatever. I was quite exasperated by a more serious affair which touched the very point which I had reserved for myself; I mean his esteem and confidence.

He was in the habit of receiving a number of letters and parcels, respecting which he held long conferences with his mother and sister. I saw that some affair of importance to him was in question, although he did not think fit to impart it to me. I felt this an outrage; I did not speak to him, and scarcely replied to his remarks. He noticed my vexation without guessing the reason, and as he really liked me, he wished to have an explanation and to appease me. He therefore stopped me one day as I was going to the Marquise de Silly's apart-

ment. I was quickly crossing a large room which he was dreamily pacing. I pretended not to see him, but advancing to meet me, he stopped me, and making me sit down, took a seat beside me, and asked leave to say a few words. He spoke with so much charm, with so much feeling, he so fully repaired the want of confidence which had affronted me, and seemed so much touched by my distress and so greatly flattered by the cause, that I was never more charmed with him or more resigned to the empire he had gained over me. This influence was indeed so great that his mind seemed to govern mine; no feeling affected him without one quite similar arising in me also. His cheerfulness, his depression, his tranquillity, his anxiety, all his various moods, became mine; not that I took pains to conform to them, but a secret spring made them correspond.

This affair, of which the mystery had caused me so much sorrow, obliged M. de Silly to present himself at Court sooner than he would otherwise have done, and perhaps sooner than he wished, for although he had a mistress there and all that was fitting for a man of fashion, he was not wearied at home. He saw there what is not seen in the great world; artless feelings, the sincerity of which was the more evident as an attempt was made to conceal them. There he also enjoyed serious conversations which afforded

him new information and made him conscious of his ready comprehension. His ideas were lively and accurate; his noble and simple expressions being well adapted to them, therefore gave a kind of harmony to his conversation; no far-fetched terms and no affectation. He was much too clever to think of displaying his powers. A predominant love of warfare riveted his thoughts on all that appertained to it. I think, if I may be permitted to pronounce on such a point, that he was endowed with talents fitted to gain military distinction. He had the capacity as well as the air of command. Ambition was the great source of his emotions, and perhaps it had in some measure deteriorated his virtues. It was the cause of his misdeeds and of his misfortunes. It is true that in him it seemed not so much a desire to exalt himself as the means of taking his proper place.

His departure, although it was not to be final, was a deep sorrow to me, though I saved appearances pretty well. Mademoiselle de Silly shed tears as he took leave of us; I concealed mine from his enquiring gaze, rather inquisitive than tender, but when he had disappeared, I thought that I had ceased to live. My eyes, accustomed to see him, now looked at nothing. I did not vouchsafe to speak, as he was not there to hear me; I believe I now ceased to think. His image alone filled my mind. I felt that each moment removed him farther

from me, and my misery increased with the distance that separated us.

A few days before his departure I had received the following letter from the Abbé de Vertot, who although known to the family only by the reputation of his works, had obtained an invitation to meet M. de Silly through my intervention.

Letter from Monsieur l'Abbé de Vertot to Mademoiselle de L.

'I awaited the return of M. Brunel to reply to the letter with which you honoured me, and to the obliging offers contained in it, as well as in that of Monsieur le Marquis de Silly. But apparently the spell still continues, and I have no hope of his return before the beginning of next week. If he is as eager to reach the château of Silly as I am, it will be at the end of this week, and I would gladly purchase at the expense of a still longer journey the honour of seeing you, paying my respects to Mademoiselle de Silly, and the hope of gaining the friendship of her noble brother. I shall be only too richly compensated for my journey if I can enjoy his conversation at my ease. We poor chroniclers should be very fortunate if we could catch some of the delicacy of his ideas, the noble refinement of his expressions, and describe as he speaks. This is between ourselves, but I candidly tell you I have never seen anyone express himself with so much sense and dignity. Such

natural talents are a source of mortification to study and arduous meditation. May you long enjoy such a delightful position. The attractions which are said to surround Mademoiselle de Silly will complete the enchantment without any participation of mine, and I am not sure if the strongest adjurations will not be required to withdraw you from a society so delightful. The hope of witnessing your happiness will enable me to overcome a certain philosophic bashfulness, and the genuine shyness of arriving at a house in which I am not known. Your merits and those of my travelling companion will serve me as a passport, and in both they are too conspicuous not to enable a bird of passage like myself to gain admission in your train. I have twice had the honour of seeing Mademoiselle de Grieu. She told me that she regretted your absence every moment. I readily believed her, and I perceived that she endured my conversation only on account of the pleasure she felt in mentioning your name and introducing it into every subject and topic of our conversation. I have the honour to be, with much respect, Mademoiselle, yours etc.'

I was pleased with a letter so consonant to my ideas. But the arrival of the abbé and M. Brunel, after the departure of Monsieur de Silly, was merely disagreeable. It seemed out of place, and a freak of which I feared the motive might be discerned.

They spent a week at Silly. The Marquis did not return until long after they were gone. I do not know why the pleasure I must have felt at his return, and the circumstances connected with it, have escaped my memory, which is so faithful in preserving other particulars less likely to make an impression. Now, I have but confused notions of what occurred after he came back. I only remember that he was more gloomy and absent than before. He had moments of agitation and distress which seemed to indicate that new feelings had taken possession of his heart. I had some idea that I was concerned in this change, but an explanation put me to confusion. I induced him to confess that he was in love, and I saw that it was not with me. But he did not perceive my distress. His sister was entirely in his confidence; he spent his days with her and I scarcely saw them.

My sojourn at Silly, where I had acquired a new being (for in this light I view the changes made in us by new feelings), this, I say, became painful to me. I had spent a part of the year there in a sort of enchantment. The charm on being further developed cast me into a state of profound melancholy. I thought that by a change of place I should give variety to my ideas and serenity to my mind. Winter was approaching; Mademoiselle de G., our neighbour, was returning to Rouen, and I went with her. Apparently this departure, which I regarded as a

relief, did not cause me so much pain as I had felt in seeing M. de Silly go away, for I have not preserved the same remembrance of it. It is true, one is generally less sorry to go oneself than to see others go.

A short time after my return to my convent, I received a letter from Monsieur de Silly. The delight and surprise of seeing his handwriting, of receiving a mark of his attention, made such an impression upon me that the shape and the outside of this letter has remained so accurately in my imagination, that when looking for it on the occasion of my writing (for I have always kept this as well as nearly all the rest of his letters) I recognised it at once amid a thousand others. I am tempted to insert it here, to marvel how I could be so deeply touched by anything so little touching.

Letter.

'I wished to leave you time to execute all the commissions with which you were entrusted, before giving you mine. The chief one, to which I hope you will bestow attention, is to come back soon, without prejudice however to the pleasures, amusements, or affairs which may be occupying you where you are. For the rest, I congratulate you on all the conquests you have made. Your modesty, no doubt, has prevented you from mentioning them,

but we have heard of them. Adieu, Mademoiselle. If the anxiety we felt on your account could have saved you from fatigue, you would have reached Rouen well and happy. This 29th.'

I wish I had the answer that I made to this letter. It said no more, but I think it contained more, and that what no word expressed was as it were written between the lines. He wrote to me again about some commissions that he gave me. I was delighted to have these little communications with him until I could meet him again. I flattered myself it would be in the following summer; he was to be at home and I had promised to return.

Meanwhile I amused myself by composing stories and novels as a vent for the feelings which filled my heart. I put into them different portraits of the same original, whom I painted sometimes full-face, sometimes in profile. I portrayed also the personages connected with my adventures, and myself as regards my character and sentiments. These futile writings served me in place of a confidant, of whom the use has always seemed to me humiliating and dangerous. They always kept my secret, for they never saw daylight, nor were they worthy of it. The plots were ill-composed. Perhaps the style and the sentiments may have merited a better groundwork.

Nothing unconnected with the idea which occu-

pied me so entirely has left any trace upon my memory. I know nothing of what I did until the following summer, the time at which I counted on returning to Silly. But things had changed. The old Marquis, whom I left very ill, had died. The discussion of business, and the domestic disputes which tolerate the presence of no strangers, precluded my being invited to return. I was affronted, and as a consolation I arranged an expedition with Mademoiselle de la Ferté, the niece of a president of parliament at Rouen, to accompany her to her father's house on a property three or four leagues from Silly. I thought that, being there, the Marquis and his mother could not avoid asking me to come to them, but I told them nothing of my journey.

We travelled in the most delightful manner possible; partly on the river in a boat, followed by another filled with musicians who played on various instruments. Monsieur de la Ferté, though old, was lively and agreeable; he was a clever man and knew many things such as one is glad to hear. One of his brothers, an abbé, a very pleasant person; his daughter, young, pretty, and amiable; and his son, ugly and almost imbecile, formed our whole party.

As the river deviated from our road, we got into carriages which had followed us, and slept at the house of a friend of mine which happened to be on our way. The next day we arrived at Rœux, the

house of M. de la Ferté, an old château of a quaint form, representing a Gothic ℜ, being built like many other châteaux in Normandy in the shape of the initial of the name it bears. The surrounding scenery was charming. Day and night the gentle murmur of streams calmed the agitation of an irritated mind. Nature presented an epitome of all her most varied beauties; meadow-land divided by sundry rivulets bordered by woody banks which opened out as if to display a view of the sea in the distance. I never saw, even in paintings, scenery so lovely as that which met the eye from every part of this house.

Melancholy as was the mood in which I arrived, I took pleasure in my visit. I was also sensible of the satisfaction testified at my presence, and especially of the remarkable esteem shown me by the master of the house, and the pains which he took to render my stay agreeable. We had an agreeable society, and none of the pleasures to be had in the country were wanting. Still, not having lost sight of the object which had brought me there, I wrote to the Marquis de Silly, on I know not what pretext, and he saw by the date of my letter that I was in his neighbourhood. In his answer he betokened his surprise, but still made no suggestions. I had such a craving to see him that I was not rebuffed by this omission. I wrote again, and in the name of Monsieur and Mademoiselle de la Ferté proposed a visit

which they were anxious to make to him and his mother. He replied that at any other time he would have been delighted to receive them, but that he was overwhelmed with business which would render this visit very inconvenient. The excuse was received with a good grace, as the proposal had been made at my instigation; there was indeed no limit to the kindness shown me in this house. The Marquise de Silly, however, sent me word that if I would come alone, they would be happy to see me, and that her son's post-chaise would meet me at a place to which the coach to Caen might convey me, as it passed by the end of the avenue of Rœux. I at once named the day of my departure, that I might find the promised carriage at the place appointed. My eagerness led me to fix such an early date that there was no time to receive an answer before starting. The day having arrived, I rose very early, although I could not set off till the afternoon. I hurried on all the events of the day, but the coach from Caen came none the sooner. I went to wait for it at the end of the avenue with Mademoiselle de la Ferté. I could not understand why it did not appear. At last it came, and no doubt at its usual hour; and the regret of my companions was as great as my delight at seeing it. I set off in full confidence that at a league's distance I should find the chaise that was to convey me to Silly. I had accom-

plished about a quarter of this league when the people of the coach, talking of one thing and another, casually mentioned that they had met the Marquis de Silly posting to Versailles. If the sky had fallen on my head, I could not have been more crushed than I was by these tidings. I was on my way to visit a person whom I should not find, who had not taken the trouble to let me know, nor disturbed himself as to what would become of me, for his chaise, on which I had counted, was the only carriage with which I could have been furnished to complete the almost impracticable journey I had to make. Until I came to the appointed spot I flattered myself, however, that some sort of substitute for this carriage would have been provided. But when, on reaching this place, called le Mérisier, I found there neither beasts nor people, nor tidings of any sort, I fell into a sort of despair. I was in a coach which I could stop only to get down into the highway and there remain; otherwise I should be obliged to continue a road that would not take me to Silly. While I was deliberating, the coach was travelling on and on, and it travelled so well that I arrived at Saint Pierre sur Dive, where the said coach was to halt for the night, and I was obliged to do the same. Here I was, therefore, in a real tavern (for it was more than a public-house) having no one with me but a lacquey who had been lent to me, as I had no

servants of my own. The horror of these quarters, the anxiety at finding myself with such insufficient escort, put me into far greater dismay than many more important incidents of my life, for they were less disproportionate to my powers of endurance at this time. Although I was not a child even then, I was not yet capable of facing difficulties; conventual education is not a good school for courage.

When I had in some degree recovered my self-possession, I enquired how far I was from Silly; I was told that I had passed it only by a league, but that there was no sort of conveyance to take me there, and that I must proceed to Caen, which was four leagues further on, unless I hired a horse. If I had been required to mount a dromedary I could not have been more terrified. However, I was obliged to make up my mind to this course, and meanwhile to spend the night in the worst bed I had ever beheld. It stood against a thin partition, which separated my room from another, which was occupied by some soldiers and carters. The necessity of overhearing their conversation was not the least of my terrors, but I was much re-assured and greatly surprised when I heard them disputing about the roundness of the world and the Antipodes. Though I could not sleep in this nest of insects, I remained calm at least until daybreak, when I intended to carry out my enterprise. A

horse was brought to me, and I was placed upon it, more like a bundle than a living being; the servant who had escorted me took it by the bridle and led it as best he could. A guide whom I had engaged misled us, and we were obliged to leave the horse by the side of a stream, which I crossed on a plank. The rest of the way we were forced to make on foot, without knowing where we were, amid heavy rain and the renowned mud of the 'Pays d'Auge.' At last I reached the castle of Silly, saturated with mire from top to toe, and so much disfigured that it was some consolation not to incur the risk of being seen by Monsieur de Silly, so great is every woman's dread of making an unfavourable impression.

Many apologies were offered for not having warned me of the unlucky accident, alleging the hurried departure of Monsieur de Silly, which scarcely left him a moment to breathe. I was obliged to put a good face upon the matter, and after a short stay I returned to Rœux, I do not remember how, and from thence with the whole party to Rouen, where I found my usual friends and companions, with the exception of M. de Rey, of whose sudden death I had heard during my absence. Although I never was in love with him, and he was no longer in love with me, I was much affected by his death.

I spent the rest of the year quietly enough in

my convent, from time to time receiving letters from the Marquis de Silly, always about matters interesting to himself, never referring to my concerns. I was highly displeased, but that which irritates the passions does not extinguish them. Shortly after my return, the Demoiselles de Neuville came as boarders to Saint Louis. The oldest was extremely pretty and rather pleasing. I made a sort of friendship with her. Women are always in a hurry to tell their secrets. Soon she recounted to me that the son of the old Comte de Novion wished to marry her; that the father, after having opposed it, fell in love with her himself, and wished to make the marriage which he had forbidden to his son. She assured me that if this piece of good luck befel her, I should always find a safe asylum in her house in case of need.

She showed me the Count's letters to her, and told me her plans for carrying out this scheme unknown to her family, who could not fail to oppose it by every means in their power. The Count was seventy years old, and she eighteen, with no fortune of her own, and very little aid from others. Her hopes seemed to be chimerical; however, she succeeded in her object, with great disregard of prudence, and by dint of very hazardous measures.

I was thus occupied with various matters without any apprehension of the terrible misfortune

hanging over me. My abbess fell so dangerously ill that I foresaw I was about to lose her, and I was left without resource. Her position as a nun put it out of her power to make any provision for me. During her illness, which lasted only a fortnight, I thought only of her, but when she was no more I perceived the abyss into which I had fallen. Her nuns deplored her when she was dead as much as they had persecuted her whilst alive, and in truth she was much to be regretted. I never saw in anyone such a fund of kindness, so much gentleness and forethought for others, and forgetfulness of self, nor greater exactitude in all her duties. Madame de Grieu, her sister, who loved her tenderly, and had never left her since their early childhood, was in a state of despair that aggravated mine. She ought to have become abbess, but the old cabals prevented it, and caused the appointment to be given to a nun belonging to the convent, and the ringleader of the malcontents. Under these circumstances it was impossible for us to remain at St. Louis. Moreover, it was necessary to pay board. The allowance which Madame de Grieu received from her family was not enough for her and me, who had no means whatever. We did not know what would become of us. She indeed had a retreat open to her in the convent of Jouarre, of which she was a nun,

but she could not make up her mind to abandon either me or a young niece who was almost as dear to her as I was. She thought it would be more for our own advantage to take us to a convent in Paris, a place full of resources, where I might find a situation of some sort.

In these difficult circumstances, Frère Maillard, a friend of mine, formerly attached to Père la Chaise, and at that time exiled to Rouen for being more popular than his master, came to tell me that he had received a letter of credit to pay my quarter's board in the convent, and that he had been informed at the same time that if I liked to remain it would be continued regularly without any cause for troubling myself as to whence it was derived. He said that the letter was not signed, and that he really did not know from whom it came. The more misfortune overwhelmed me, the more determined I was to support myself. I would have no suspicious aid. I discovered afterwards that this generous incognito was the Marquis de Silly.

The Abbé de Vertot, who was at Paris, and to whom, when apprising him of my loss, I had said that nothing was left me but the air I breathed, sent me a bill of exchange for fifty pistoles. I returned it to him the next day. Monsieur Brunel too was anxious to give me as much money as I might require. I refused all these offers, being

quite resolved to accept nothing as long as I was uncertain of being able to repay my obligations. I was at the most critical moment of my life. I felt the need of arming myself with undeviating principles capable of regulating my whole conduct. I resolved to endure penury or to take refuge in servitude rather than to be false to my character, being persuaded that nothing is capable of degrading us but our own actions. I should not have known myself had I not been subjected to this ordeal; it has shown me that we give way to necessity less by reason of its intrinsic force than from our own weakness. However, not to push anything to exaggeration, I accepted from a female friend the sum of ten pistoles which she ventured to lend me. It was the same person who had spent some time with me at Silly. She had now come back to live at St. Louis.

Madame de Grieu was invited by one of her brothers who had an estate in Normandy to stay at his house, with her niece, the daughter of this brother. She was not asked to bring me, which greatly annoyed her. Mademoiselle du Tot, one of my old friends, a person of rare merit, offered me a retreat at the house of her uncle, Monsieur de Rolet, with whom she lived. I remained there until Madame de Grieu's departure for Paris. It was here that I began to feel my change of fortune. I

had always lived in a place where I was the principal object, where the small affairs which concerned me constituted events. I now received mere civilities. . . . One day I had a headache. Formerly no more was requisite to occupy the whole house, from the abbess to the sisters; here it was considered enough to send and ask if I wanted anything. I shall never forget my surprise at finding a circumstance so lightly regarded which had hitherto been treated with so much ceremony. I considered myself so entirely out of my own sphere that I did not know what to do with myself. I spent six weeks in this house, where I received great kindness.

Mademoiselle du Tot was a very clever woman, and so very sensible that one felt shy of living with her, exposed to a judicial criticism which it was impossible to retaliate. Her uncle, the son of a Madame de la Croisette, who had been lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse de Longueville, had lived in the world and preserved his courtly manners to a very advanced age. I was the more sensible of his kindness in receiving me in his house, as I had offended him a long time before in a song which I foolishly sang at a dinner which he had given me, and in the presence of a large party. Since then we had not met. My misfortune made him forget my peccadillo. This generous feeling deserves the

recollection which I have preserved of it, as well as the regret I experienced at my indiscretion.

While I was awaiting the moment for going to Paris, Mademoiselle de Neuville, finding by the letters of her elderly admirer the Count, that he was less eager to conclude their marriage, resolved to go and see him at Paris with her sister and a sort of governess, and was to take up her quarters in an hotel. It was about the time at which Madame de Grieu was to arrive there, and when I intended to go. The Demoiselles de Neuville, who had shown much sympathy in my misfortune, offered to take me with them. I did not approve of their journey, but not being able to deter them, I took advantage of the opportunity. We started together, and installed ourselves at the little Hotel de Chatillon, where they procured me a lodging.

Here I was then at Paris, without knowing what would become of me. I went to call on several people to whom letters of recommendation had been given me, hoping that they would find me what is called an opening. My highest hope was to obtain a situation as governess in a great family. Fortunately I had some taste for this employment, and I imagined that the taste implied the talent. It was a strange fall in life for anyone who had lived as I had, to go from door to door begging for the patronage of people to whom I was unknown, to submit to

their cross-examination and cold contempt. I gained nothing by this painful ordeal, and I soon abandoned it.

A few days after my arrival at Paris, M. Brunel came there and paid me a visit, bringing with him M. de Fontenelle. They had been intimate friends from their youth, which they had spent at Rouen, the native town of both. The harmony of their minds and characters rendered them close allies. Monsieur Brunel occasionally went to Paris to see him, and had often talked to him of me. I knew him by his works, and chiefly by his 'Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences,' which he sent every year to his friend, who did not fail to forward it to me; and thanks to the light which M. de Fontenelle sheds on everything he handles, I understood a great part of it, although I cannot have understood it all. I was therefore forearmed with the high opinion which he deserves. I was delighted to make his acquaintance and to be known by a man so celebrated, who in case of need could at least speak a good word for me which would be of great weight.

I was still at my hotel, where I remained only four or five days, when I received a letter from the Marquis de Silly. Two months previously he had written me a very commonplace letter of condolence on my bereavement. This one was full of good advice.

Letter.

'I am told, Mademoiselle, that you are at Paris. The interest which I take in all that concerns you led me to feel great pleasure in hearing of the course you had taken.

'You will perhaps be surprised to find a letter from me full of good precepts. It is not much my habit to give them, and still less to write them, but you are a friend, and I feel that I ought to speak to you as such.

'I think that, with your opinions, the shorter your stay in an hotel the better. It is not in an hotel that I should wish you to make your first acquaintances.

'My views may seem rather severe, but I think that in your place I would admit of no compromise. Your age may be a drawback to you, and it is to your advantage to conceal it. For the same reason I would have you somewhat cautious in your choice of friends, both male and female. I should also wish you to be more attentive to your reputation for good sense than for wit. I beg you to employ the simplest expressions, and above all not to make use of such as are proper to science. Although they may express your meaning much better, still do not yield to the temptation of adopting them. To conclude, I should wish you in the first instance to

devote yourself solely to the establishment of a good reputation, without seeking to please by means of fascination. But I fear that my last maxim is contrary to nature. The wish to please may be natural to your sex without reversing the order of the world. With the object of pleasing be perfectly simple; let there be no affectation in your manners.

'This is enough, and perhaps too much. I beg you to be assured that you can truly count upon me.'

This letter made it perfectly clear what manner of feeling Monsieur de Silly entertained for me. I was touched to perceive a great deal of friendship and real interest in my conduct, but I was hurt to see that he suspected me of trying to please, and that he had mistaken for a general tendency a feeling which existed only for him. I answered in an offended tone. He fancied that his counsels had annoyed me, as was evident from the letter which I received some days later. Here it is.

Letter.

'My letter produced the effect upon you that I had expected, and I could not help laughing as I read it again. The first impulse of people who are clever and therefore vain, is, I believe, to feel advice as an offensive assumption of superiority.

'I am not surprised that you were angry at my

impression that you were capable of trying to please, and on that point your protests were just.

'After all, I would fain believe, seeing your displeasure, that women have some such inclination. To speak seriously, I did not mean it in the sense you supposed; I meant, by the fascinations of your mind. I am sure that your conversation will be proportioned to the people you meet, but when those with whom one is accustomed to associate are possessed of talent and learning, one easily acquires a habit of using certain terms. However, I am fully persuaded that you do not require advice. I beg you to count upon me more than on anyone else.'

Madame de Grieu arrived at Paris with her niece a few days after me. On the way they met the Marquise de Silly, who was about to settle there, and who finally established herself at the Community of Miramion. I went with Madame de Grieu to stay with one of her brothers. This one was not prejudiced against me like the rest. He had a house at the Marais where we remained until we had found a convent.

I had a sister who was with the Duchesse de la Ferté. She came to pay me a visit. Some years before, she had come to Rouen to make acquaintance with me, for hitherto we had never met. She had then been mortified by the difference of our positions. The consideration which I enjoyed and

the sort of respect paid to me in a place of which the masters were my subjects, were displeasing to her ; even the attentions paid to herself, merely testifying the kindness shown to me, only served to increase her vexation. She had a natural intelligence, the air of the world, and a tolerably pretty face. I thought her pleasing, but from the point of view from which she regarded me, she could only have felt repugnance towards me. But when she saw me shorn of my glory, she made advances, showed me much kindness, and gave me some clothes of which I was beginning to be in want.

At last we found a convent. It was the Presentation, where they were willing to receive us at a moderate board, that is to say, Madame, Mademoiselle de Grieu, and myself. I had just enough money remaining to pay one quarter, at the end of which I saw no resource. A short time before the quarter was over, I fell ill enough to hope that I might die, but one never does die opportunely, and I was cheated of my expectation.

When I was convalescent and almost in despair, my sister came to see me, and in a transport of delight announced the fortune I was to make. She told me that in going to Versailles with the Duchesse de la Ferté, she had related to her that she had a young sister who had been peculiarly well educated in a provincial convent. She told her that

I knew all there was to be known, and gave her a list of the sciences with which she supposed me to be acquainted, and of which she mutilated the names. My sister, who knew nothing, readily thought that I knew a great deal. The Duchesse de la Ferté, who knew no more about the matter than herself, believed it all and held me to be a prodigy. She was a person who took the most violent enthusiasms. She arrived at Versailles full of this supposed wonder, and talked of it wherever she went, chiefly at the house of her sister Madame de Ventadour, where she met the Cardinal de Rohan. She grew excited as she talked, and said a great deal more than she had been told. It was thought essential to secure so great a treasure. The Dauphine was still living. She was supposed to be in a state of pregnancy, and it was thought that if she had a daughter, I might assist in her education. Meanwhile it was decided that I was to be placed at Jouarre with the Demoiselles de Rohan, who were all three there, and in my hands they were to become so many masterpieces.

Having told me this story, my sister said that it was absolutely necessary that I should go to render my thanks and show myself to her mistress; that she was to return to Versailles that same day, and that when I had made my obeisance I should come back at once. I had no tidy gown in which to

present myself, but I borrowed one for two or three hours from a boarder in the convent, and when my sister had put a finishing touch to my dress, we set off together. We arrived at the Duchess's house when she was just awake. She was delighted to see me, and thought me charming. In the full tide of her enthusiasm she was not likely to think me otherwise. After speaking a few words, and receiving some very simple if not flat answers, 'Really,' she said, 'she talks delightfully. She has come down most opportunely to write me a letter to Monsieur Desmarets, which I want him to receive immediately. There, Mademoiselle, you shall have some paper, and you have only got to write.' 'But what, Madam?' said I, very much perplexed. 'You shall put it as you like,' replied she, 'but it must be nicely done. I want him to grant my request.' 'But, Madam,' I returned, 'it will be necessary for me to know what you wish to say to him.' 'Eh? No; you understand.' I understood nothing at all. It was in vain to protest; I could not get her to explain. At last, putting together the disjointed words she let fall, I gained some idea of the subject, but I was not much further advanced, for I did not know the forms and ceremonies in use among people of title, and I plainly saw that she would make no distinction between a want of knowledge and a want of sense. However, I took the paper offered me,

and without an idea of how to set about it, I sat down to write while she was getting up. I wrote entirely at random, and having finished the letter, I went to present it to her, quite uncertain of success. 'There!' she cried, 'that is just the very thing I wanted to say. It is capital, the way in which she has seized my idea. Henrietta, your sister is wonderful! Well, as she writes so well, she shall write another letter to my man of business. That can be done while I am dressing.' This time there was no need to ask what she had to say. She poured out a torrent of words that all my attention did not enable me to follow, and I found myself still more perplexed with this second trial. She had mentioned both her solicitor and her counsel, who figured conspicuously in this letter. They were totally unknown to me, and unfortunately I mistook one for the other. 'The matter is well explained,' she said, when she had read the letter, 'but I am surprised that a girl so clever as you are should call my counsel by the name of my solicitor.' Thus she discovered the limits of my genius. Happily, her good opinion was not entirely forfeited by this mistake.

While I was writing all her despatches she had finished her toilet, and thought of nothing but starting for Versailles. I followed her to her coach, and when she had got in, and my sister, who was accom-

panying her, had also taken her seat, just as the door was about to be shut and I was beginning to breathe, 'I think,' said she to my sister, 'that I had better take her with me at once. Get in, get in, Mademoiselle; I want to show you to Madame de Ventadour.' I was petrified by this proposal, but above all, what froze my heart was this gown, borrowed for two hours, in which I was afraid I should be dragged round the world; as was indeed nearly the case. However, in spite of these considerations there was no possibility of drawing back. I was no longer in a position to have a will of my own, or to resist the will of others. So I got in with a heart ill at ease. She did not notice it, and talked all the way. She said a hundred things at a time without the slightest connection. Still there was so much vivacity, ingenuousness, and grace in her conversation that it was a pleasure to listen. After asking me several questions without hearing the answer, 'No doubt,' said she, 'as you know so many things, you are able to fix the points for drawing a horoscope. That is my delight.' I assured her that I had no notion of this science. 'But,' she rejoined, 'what is the good of learning so many others that are of no use?' I protested that I had learnt none, but she was not listening, and began to extol Geomancy, Cheiromancy, etc., and recounted to me all the predictions made to her, of which she was still

expecting the fulfilment; related several memorable anecdotes on this subject, and lastly her dream of the preceding night, as well as a number of others equally remarkable, which were all to have their effect sooner or later. I listened with great submission and little faith. At last we arrived; she desired my sister and me to go first to her apartment, and to come to her later at Madame de Ventadour's, where she was set down. She lived at Versailles, in the attics of the castle. I found it impossible to reach the top of the staircase, and if some of her servants, who were following us, had not carried me up the last few steps, I should have remained on the way. This exhaustion of body and mind threw me into that state of prostration in which one feels nothing and thinks still less. I had not understood what the Duchess had said about my presentation to Madame de Ventadour. My sister had understood no better, and I imagined that we had only to wait until she sent for me. So we remained in her apartment until evening, when she came in, furious that we had not obeyed her orders. They had been indistinctly given, but that could not be represented to her. She had intended me to come to her; I had not done so, and my fortune was lost. I listened in respectful silence to her regrets, reproaches, and all the wonted expressions of uncontrolled and impetuous feelings. When all

was said she became calm, and thought only of the morrow. She said that she should take me to her sister, and she took me. I found a person of a totally different character from hers. The gentleness and sincerity depicted in her countenance heralded the peacefulness of her mind and the evenness of her temper. She received me with great kindness and civility; talked of my mother, who had been governess to her daughter; of the regard she felt for her; of the good she had heard said of me; and lastly of her wish to find me a suitable situation. I was then taken to see the Duc de Bretagne, who was still living, and the King, who was only just born. I was told that I must also see the beauties of Versailles, and I was dragged over every part of it. I thought I should have died of fatigue.

Madame de la Ferté had talked so much of me already that I was gazed at as an object of curiosity, and a number of people wanted to see me, examine me, and question me. To finish my day, she insisted that I should attend the King's supper, and when she had discovered me among the crowd, she pointed me out to the Duc de Bourgogne, to whom she descanted during part of the supper on my talents and supposed learning. She did not stop there. The next day, having gone to the Duchesse de Noailles, she summoned me to join her. I came. 'There,' she said, 'is the person of whom I spoke

to you, and who has such a great intellect and knows so many things. Come, Mademoiselle, talk. Madame, you shall see how well she talks.' She perceived that I hesitated, and thought she must help me, as one suggests an air to a singer making her preludes. 'Say something about religion,' she continued, 'and then you shall talk of other things.' I was more confounded than can be described, and I cannot even remember how I got out of the difficulty. Probably it was by denying the talents she imputed to me, and I believe I got off better than I deserved.

Something like this ridiculous scene was repeated in other houses to which I was taken. Thus I found that I was to be led about like a monkey or any other animal that plays tricks at a fair. I could have wished the earth to open and swallow me up rather than continue to enact such a part. Perhaps I ought to reproach myself with having been so much vexed by the scenes to which I was exposed that I did not sufficiently value the motive of these strange doings, which was no other than an immoderate desire to gain me appreciation.

I had already spent three or four days in this desperate condition, when the Duchess came in one evening, storming against Madame de Ventadour and Cardinal de Rohan for deciding nothing with regard to me; because, in order to place me at

Jouarre, it was necessary to give an annuity which no one was willing to pay. 'Well,' she said to my sister, 'as they make such a fuss about it, we must do without them. I am great enough to make her fortune without their assistance. I shall take her to be with me; she will be better off there than anywhere else.' This was, of all things, the fate I most dreaded, and I remained speechless and motionless, not able to make up my mind in any way to acquiesce in this proposal. Her great excitement prevented her from observing my immobility. When we were alone, my sister made me just reproaches. I confessed that my repugnance to the situation, and my fear of saying anything that would compromise me, had deprived me of all power of utterance.

Madame de la Ferté's indignation against her sister determined her to leave Versailles the next day, and I flattered myself that I should be restored to my convent, in which I longed to be reinstated, but I had not yet come to the end of my trials. The Duchess announced that she was going to Seaux, and that she intended to take me with her, to show me to Monsieur de Malesieu, who was peculiarly competent to judge of my merits. It was an aggravation of my misery to parade myself on a new stage.

Before she set off, the Abbé de Vertot, her relation and friend, who was at Versailles, came to pay

her a visit. She gave him an arm-chair, and left me standing, as she often did when there was company. I could not bear to preserve such a submissive attitude before one who had always offered me the most profound homage. I sought refuge in another room, and shed tears over the humiliation of my position.

In the afternoon we went to Seaux, where the Duchesse de la Ferté, still bent upon her object, did not fail to speak of me with her wonted exaggeration. The Duchesse du Maine, who was accustomed to her hyperboles and seldom paid attention to anything that did not interest her, listened little, if at all. However, she insisted on exhibiting me, and induced her to consent out of good nature. But the Duchesse du Maine did not stop to look at me. Seeing that this attempt had produced no result, Madame de la Ferté begged Monsieur de Malesieu to come and see me at her house, and to have some conversation with me. He came, stayed a long time, and discussed various subjects, on which he found me tolerably well informed. The desire to oblige the Duchesse de la Ferté, the tendency to exaggeration which he shared with her, and perhaps the wish to be of service to me, led him to confirm all the marvels to which she gave utterance. His good word brought me to honour at a Court in which the decisions of M. de Malesieu

were as infallible as those of Pythagoras among his disciples. The hottest disputes were at an end the moment anyone pronounced the magic words, 'He has said it.' He said that I was a remarkable person, and it was believed. People came to see me: they listened to me. I was always being admired.

Although I was made much of at Seaux, and there were plays and amusements every day, this manner of life, to which I was entirely unaccustomed both in body and mind, was insupportable to me. The Duchesse de la Ferté did not perceive it, for she was perpetually praising me for having at once fallen into the ways of the world; that I kept late hours, was ready for everything, and that nothing put me out. In this respect I was far from being what I endeavoured to appear. I was naturally delicate, and had become more so from the excessive care taken of my health. It was a want of foresight on the part of those who had brought me up in a manner so little suitable to my fortune, and it was in this point that I most keenly felt the change, and it has been the most real misfortune of my life.

At last the Duchesse de la Ferté returned to Paris, and took me back to my convent, much to my satisfaction. She bestowed many endearments upon me at parting, and assured me that if my affair was not immediately concluded, she should

take further measures, and that however things might turn out, I should not be long without seeing her again. I was enchanted to find myself again with Madame de Grieu and her niece, and to relate my adventures to them. Mademoiselle de Grieu was becoming sufficiently sensible to inspire affection. I regarded her as my daughter. On leaving her nurse she had been placed in the convent, and was constituted my pupil, in order to gratify the ruling passion which since childhood had possessed me for training and tending some one, whoever it might be. In this I was not more fortunate than Plato, who was never able to find even a squalid hamlet in which to establish his laws. Nobody would listen to my precepts, not even the young niece, who was infected by the jealousy against me prevalent in her family, and did not forgive me the affection of her aunts until she was old enough to see that I was not unworthy of it. Ultimately we became more intimate than I ever was with any other person.

My convent was not far from Miramion, and I sometimes went there to see the Marquise de Silly. One day I met her son, who was only passing through Paris. I felt a very decided pleasure at this unexpected encounter. All the mental agitations I had undergone since I had seen him had made no alteration in my feelings. This dominant

idea had always kept its place, and preserved the power of affecting me more than anything else. It maintained itself so persistently that it guaranteed me against all other fascinations during the most susceptible period of my life. This short interview was the only one, and took place in the presence of his mother. What we said has escaped my memory.

A few days after my return, the Duchesse de la Ferté, who did not lose sight of me, sent me some songs composed by Monsieur de Malesieu, and desired me to write him an appropriate letter for her to deliver. So I wrote I do not know what; apparently it was in a strain of high eulogy, for I received the following magniloquent reply:—

Letter.

'The Duchesse de la Ferté having gone away, Mademoiselle, without my knowledge, I have lost the opportunity of entrusting to her the thanks due to you for the charming letter with which you honoured me. I was, no doubt, in great need of her mediation to render my gratitude acceptable; and while the missive which she transmitted to me from you had an unlimited worth of its own, and did not require to pass through hands capable of giving value to indifferent objects, I confess, Mademoiselle, that I am deprived of powerful aid in losing the

opportunity of imploring her Grace to assure you more fully than I can how sensible I am of the honour you have done me. I was not aware that she had sent you the little songs of Seaux. I can attest that I have hitherto esteemed them lightly; yet, if it be true, Mademoiselle, that on paper they appeared to you as you say, I hold them to be of a superior order, and am not sufficiently my own enemy to dispute an opinion so trustworthy and so decisive.

'You have so fully convinced me of the accuracy and infallibility of your judgment, that it would be impossible for me to dispute it. Therefore, Mademoiselle, by the knowledge that you must have of yourself, tell me, if you please, what I am to think of your merits. People of superior genius such as yours cannot mistake themselves. They owe to themselves the justice which they are capable of rendering to others. Nothing is so familiar to them as their discrimination of themselves, and their greatest effort of modesty should only lead them to thank the First Cause, the Eternal Author of intellect, for having given them so good a share. You, Mademoiselle, owe Him more than anyone. As to me, I am infinitely indebted to the Duchesse de la Ferté for her kindness in making me acquainted with such a treasure. I should esteem myself happy were I permitted to approach it occasionally, and were I

able, once in my life, to prove by my services the regard and sincere respect with which I am, Mademoiselle,

'Yours, etc.,

'MALESIEU.'

Seaux, *May* 30, 1710.

The Duchesse de la Ferté, highly pleased with the success of my letter, came to fetch me soon afterwards to take me to Seaux, to attend some new festivity. As she had not given me notice, she thought fit to wait at the door of the convent while I was getting ready, and such was the strength of her attachment for me that she did not lose her patience after her usual fashion. She overwhelmed me with kindness when she saw me, and I felt that she was a real friend. I should have been glad to attach myself to her, but her manner of life was too much opposed to my way of thinking. There were also difficulties which would have made me prefer any other house to hers. A certain Louison, formerly her maid, had now made herself mistress, and could not patiently have endured the honours intended for me; nor would my own sister have always witnessed them without envy. All this I regarded as an inexhaustible source of trouble, so antagonistic to my disposition that anything else seemed more supportable. Hence I made a firm resolution that, happen what might, I would not split upon this

rock, and I took great care to evade anything in my expressions of gratitude that might tend that way.

However, as I was now not without hopes of gaining employment, I decided on borrowing some money to continue the payment of my board at the convent. I accepted it from Monsieur Brunel, my oldest friend, whilst awaiting the result that I was led to expect.

I have omitted noticing the journey to Seaux, which was in no way remarkable, except by a number of festivities and pleasures which I was not in a condition to share. The Duchess took me with her nearly every time she went. I always saw Monsieur Malesieu, who continued to testify a great regard for me.

The Duchess frequently brought me back to the Presentation at hours very unsuitable to a convent. The abbess, Madame de Riberolles, used to take the keys and open the doors for me herself, to prevent the nuns from grumbling.

The hopes entertained for me through the assistance of Madame de Ventadour were fading away. Cardinal de Rohan, as an excuse, said that my doctrinal opinions must be examined as a crucial point. It was ascertained that I was known to Monsieur de Fontenelle, and he was questioned as to my views. He said that all he knew on this subject was that I had been brought up in a convent

managed by the Jesuits. This testimony was not considered sufficient. The Abbé de Tressan, afterwards Archbishop of Rouen, was commissioned to examine me on the point in question. This ceremony took place at the house of the Duchesse de la Ferté in Paris, to which we severally repaired. It was taking the affair seriously. The examination passed off in jests, which gained me the goodwill of the examiner sufficiently to obtain his most favourable testimony, which, nevertheless, produced no results whatever.

The Duchess was fortifying herself in the design of taking me into her own household, but she did not dare to keep me for fear of Louison, to whom she had not as yet confessed her intention. I slept one night at her house, on I know not what occasion. The more I saw of the style of the establishment, the more I feared to embark in it, and the more I congratulated myself on the obstacle which prevented my admittance.

The Abbé de Vertot was then in Paris, and occasionally came to see me at my convent. One day when we were in a parlour in which were several separate gratings, I saw him bowing to a man who was at another of these openings. I asked who it was. He said 'It is the famous anatomist, Monsieur du Verney.' I had read his works, and I told the abbé how highly I thought of him. He beckoned to him to approach and made us acquainted. Du

Verney, the most excitable of men, flattered by my good opinion of him, took a violent fancy to me. He was an intimate friend of Madame de Vauvray, who resided near the Jardin Royal, where he lived. He saw her constantly, and did not fail to tell her of the discovery he had made in her neighbourhood, and suggested that she should avail herself of it. She consented the more readily as she had few resources in a district so remote. He came thereupon to ask me in her name to go and dine with her, and told me that she would send her coach the next day to fetch me. I was quite aware that it was not customary to present oneself in this fashion, but I was not in a position to be fastidious. I wanted acquaintances and even friends if I could make any; no time was to be lost, and I could not afford the tardiness of petty formalities.

Accordingly I went to dine with Madame de Vauvray, and I was very well received. I found a woman of a singular countenance but of great talent; a fine house that she had built, a big servant, a number of carriages, a table delicately served, pleasant walks both in her private gardens and in the Herbarium, of which she had the keys, and which communicated with her own grounds. I liked all this well enough to be glad that she invited me to visit her frequently, and even to make an occasional stay. She did not fail to send for me before long,

and to keep me for several days. My Duchess was at Fontainebleau, I think, and I was free. Madame de Vauvray saw little society on account of the remoteness of her residence, but the little she saw was extremely good company. Ferran, her nephew, who was very clever, was often there; and du Verney came as often as he had time, so that I amused myself very much, and had a fair success. Monsieur de Vauvray, although not kind to his wife, was glad to see me. However, one day when he had asked a large party to dinner, amongst others the Dukes de la Feuillade and de Rohan, and the Abbé de Bussy, Madame de Vauvray, thinking it unfit to produce an unknown person in such society, told her husband that as I was keeping *maigre* and the dinner would be served *en gras*, I should dine in her room, and that she would keep me company. This was sparing me the vexation as much as possible, but I felt it all the same, although without allowing it to be seen. I exhorted her to go and dine, and assured her that I was able to eat alone. She would not go; but when the party sat down to dinner, they enquired what had become of her. Monsieur de Vauvray said that she had a person with her who was not yet accustomed to society, and that she was dining with her friend. They begged that she would come and bring her guest. The dinner took a lively turn, and the con-

versation was very agreeable. I made some repartees, which succeeded so well that the general attention turned upon me. I did not let it escape, and this little triumph was all the more grateful to me, as it justified the final decision to produce me, and avenged me of the original mortification. There was no hesitation in future, and if my society was not deemed an honour, at least it was a pleasure. I was apparently good company at that time; and, though I can no longer find any traces of it, I can imagine it to have been the case. I was thirty years younger, and my intellect, though never great, was then upheld and brought into play by the most urgent motives, such as the desire to regain consideration and even a maintenance, of which I was at that time destitute.

I was indebted to Madame de Vauvray for the acquaintance of a considerable number of people of the world and people of talent. She took me to several houses—a thing which many others would not have ventured to do for a person so devoid as I was of all that is valued in the world; and the manner in which she introduced me gained me all sorts of kindness and benevolence from those to whose houses she took me. One day when I was dining with her in company with the Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Monsieur de Fontenelle, and they discussed my position and the means of obtaining me

an advantageous situation, the abbé, a protector of the human race, was of opinion that I should be proposed to the Princess,* that she might place me with Mademoiselle de Clermont whom she had adopted, and to whom she intended to give a better education than princesses usually receive. He told us that the Abbé Couture was already charged to instruct her in history and other subjects suitable to her sex and rank; that I might be suggested as capable of following up such views, and advancing her in the desired acquirements; that I ought to apply to Monsieur de Malesieu, whom I frequently saw at Seaux, and to beg him to broach the subject to the Princess, and bear witness in my favour.

My little visits to Madame de Vauvray did not prevent my being always at the orders of the Duchesse de la Ferté. I followed her proceedings closely enough to be always at my convent when she came to fetch me. It would not have done for her to know that I left it for the sake of others as well as for her.

Soon after making this plan, she took me to Seaux. Monsieur de Malesieu came to see me as usual. I informed him of my need of a situation suitable to the way of life I had hitherto led, and imparted to him my views respecting Mademoiselle de Clermont, into which he perfectly entered, pro-

* The Princesse de Condé, mother of the Duchesse du Maine.

mising to do his best for me, and that as promptly as possible.

An hour after this conversation he returned and told me that, in working at my object, he had attained another which he thought better; that he wished to support my claims on the Princess by the recommendation of the Duchesse de Maine, and that when he had spoken to her she said, 'But if this girl has so much merit, why should I give her to my niece? Would it not be better to take her for myself?' He replied that she could not do better; that I was fit for anything, and that I should be very useful to his wife, Madame de Malesieu, governess to Mademoiselle du Maine, in assisting her in the duties of her office.' The Duchesse du Maine answered, 'It requires the consent of the Duc du Maine, and you must make him agree to this increase of expense.' There was at that time no question of the place I afterwards filled.

This proposal quite suited my views, and I was delighted. I thanked Monsieur de Malesieu a thousand times, and he assured me that it only remained to inform the Duchesse de la Ferté, to whom I had as yet said nothing. He added that the Duchesse du Maine would mention it herself, and that it might be looked on as a settled thing. She did so, but the Duchesse de la Ferté was furious at the proposal, and declared that she would not

allow herself to be deprived of a person on whom she had counted as the solace of her existence. The Duchesse du Maine replied that, from what she had heard, she understood that I required a situation, whence she had concluded that she did not intend to keep me herself. The Duchesse de la Ferté, after expending all her lamentations, finished by saying that she did not want to keep me against my will, but that I must give an explanation.

I was thrown into consternation by this announcement, which I received from Monsieur de Malesieu, who came to speak to me for the third time that day. He said, 'You will have to give an explanation this evening; think what you will say.' 'Do you dictate the answer,' I replied. 'You have conducted the whole of this affair; I will follow your advice.' He was of opinion that I should tell the Duchesse de la Ferté that I owed everything to her, and left her absolute mistress of my fate. I should have done better to have confessed the reasons which prevented me from attaching myself to her household, and begged her to assent to the arrangement offered. It would have been more candid, more in accordance with my inclinations, and I should have avoided the great difficulties to which this prevarication gave rise; but I thought it right to allow myself to be guided.

In the evening Madame de la Ferté at last came

to her apartment. I was awaiting her in terror, foreseeing the storm I was to encounter, and more distressed than by anything else at finding myself accused of wrongs against a person who had overwhelmed me with kindness. She came into her room, not with her usual expressions, but with dignified coldness. She sat down quietly and said—'Mademoiselle, I have heard with surprise that you are endeavouring to find a situation. I imagined that you counted upon me. If you prefer being with a great Princess, the negotiations ought not to have been made without my participation. But I must know what you think and what you intend to do.' 'Whatever you please, Madam,' I replied; 'I am in your hands; I owe everything to you; you can dispose of me as you think best.' 'Very well, Mademoiselle,' she rejoined; 'as I am to decide, I will not resign you to anyone, and I will take care that you shall be sufficiently well off with me to experience no regrets.' She then told me that she would have an apartment fitted up for me in her house; that I should be as much mistress in it as she was; I was to be her companion when she was at home; and that when she went to Court she should leave me an establishment at Paris and liberty to do as I pleased.

I should have thought this mode of life very pleasant had I not looked at the other side; had I

not known that my sister, taken at first on the footing of a favourite, had become a lady's-maid; and had I not thought that the more violent was the fancy for me the less durable it would be, and the more it would excite the jealousy of the troop of women who filled the house. For besides Louison, who was at the head, my sister and other maids of inferior dignity, she was bringing up a young girl whom she named Sylvine, beautiful as the day, and picked up in the fields at La Loupe, one of her estates. She idolised this wood-nymph, and spared no expense in adorning her person and cultivating her talents, her lovely voice among others. This warm affection did not eventually prevent her from becoming a servant like the rest—a fate as inevitable as that of Circe's lovers. What could I have done in the midst of all this? But how to escape? I saw Monsieur de Malesieu again. He told me that there was no help for it; the Duchesse du Maine would not, on any account, make a quarrel with her old friend Madame de la Ferté, and unless I could free myself unaided, there was no hope for me.

With this object I took the strange resolution to endeavour to displease a person who was enchanted with me, and whom I liked, for the many marks of kindness I had received from her had touched me deeply; moreover, although she had great faults, I

thought her extremely pleasing, and did not blame her personally for the mortification which she caused me.

To understand how painful it is to pride and kindness of heart to assume an unfavourable disguise, it is necessary to have tried the experiment, and it is an experience that is not common.

I had an opportunity of carrying out this strange project in a journey which I made with her to La Ferté. She omitted nothing that could render it agreeable. She knew that I was extremely fond of Mademoiselle de Grieu, who was with me at the Presentation; she invited her to join in this country excursion, and took us both with her. I was taken ill on the road, and did not conceal my indisposition as I was accustomed to do. I gave way to my various inclinations, which must have astonished her all the more that she had never noticed them before. I opposed everything that I did not fancy; I expressed my opinions without trying to bring them into harmony with hers; in short I put no restraint upon myself. But it cost me more effort than self-control would have done, and she was hurt, but without taking the aversion to me with which I wanted to inspire her; an undertaking all the more difficult to accomplish as I had never seen her either more amiable or agreeable. In the country she laid aside a certain air of dignity which she main-

tained at Court and in its vicinity. We lived with the most perfect familiarity. She carried it so far that she assembled not only her servants, but all her tradesmen, the butcher, the baker, etc., set them round a large table, and played a sort of Lansquenet with them. She used to whisper in my ear, 'I cheat them, but they rob me.'

We spent a fortnight at La Ferté: it is a beautiful place. I had my intimate friend with me; we made charming excursions and fared well, although the Duchess had not brought her cook, with whom she was affronted because he had asked her for some more larders. 'That is the way,' she said, 'that great families are ruined; larders and always larders. Marshal de la Ferté spent twelve hundred thousand francs on larders. I prefer having my porter to cook for me.' And thus it was. On our return from the journey she said, 'Your rooms at my house are not ready yet; I am going to have them finished; meanwhile you shall stay at your convent and I shall pay your board.' I was delighted to return, and began to hope that by dint of delay some favourable solution might occur. And indeed the fear of affronting Louison, and some business of the moment, induced her still further to postpone installing me in her house, which I had supposed she would have done towards the end of the year. But about that time she wrote and asked me for drafts

of letters to the King and Queen of Spain, Monsieur de Vendôme and Madame des Ursins, on the occasion of a victory on which she wished to offer her congratulations. At the end of her letter she desired me to pay my abbess my board for the month of January; that she must be deprived of my companionship for that time, but that she was none the less attached to me. The opening of the new year gave me occasion to write to M. de Malesieu. I had not seen him since my mischance, as the Duchess would not take me again to Seaux. My letter consisted merely of the compliments customary at that season. Monsieur de Malesieu sent me this one in reply.

Letter.

At Versailles, January 16th, 1711.

'I am vowing vengeance against the post, Mademoiselle, for having delayed for a fortnight the precious token of your remembrance. I have only this moment received the letter which you did me the honour of writing me on New Year's day. The speed is not great in proportion to the distance; but what distresses me still more, in reading your letter, Mademoiselle, is to find that you are still at your convent. I should have inferred that the Duchesse de la Ferté had set off on some long journey if I had not had the honour of seeing her here at the beginning of this month I do not therefore know

what interpretation to put on the continuation of your cloister life. The Duchesse de la Ferté, while at Seaux, did me the honour of expressing a great regard for you, and a strong desire to keep you with her. On the proposal I made to her on the part of the Duchesse du Maine, she testified in such obliging terms how essential she considered you in the management of her affairs and her own comfort, that I own, Mademoiselle, that I advised her to follow her inclination, and to keep for herself a person whose rare qualities she was so well able to appreciate. I never imagined that your arrangements were not yet made with this lady, who certainly has a great appreciation for merit, and who seemed so well aware of yours. When I have the honour of seeing her, I shall endeavour to arrive at the solution of this enigma. I have the honour to be, Mademoiselle, very respectfully yours etc.'

On the receipt of this letter from M. de Malesieu I informed him that I had reason to believe that the Duchesse de la Ferté no longer intended to attach me to her household ; that I considered myself free in this respect, and at liberty to profit by the kindness of the Duchesse du Maine, if I could still lay claim to it. He showed this letter to the Duchesse de la Ferté, who in a fury at once sent me word, by my sister, that she would not hear my name mentioned

again. I was in despair at his having shown it to her, and thus drawn upon me the full tide of her wrath, which I moreover deserved. This, I think, is the most faulty portion of my life, for although my sister, who probably did not wish to have me with her, had exaggerated the hesitations of the Duchess, and given me to understand that she would not decide upon taking me into her house, and would leave me permanently adrift, I ought not to have stated it so positively to M. de Malesieu. However, I wrote to apprize him of this complete rupture. This is the answer which he made me.

Letter.

At Versailles, January 24th, 1711.

'I read to the Duchesse du Maine the last letter with which you have honoured me. Her Serene Highness was not a little surprised to hear that the Duchesse de la Ferté had released you from your engagement through the intervention of your sister. She commands me to inform you, Mademoiselle, that next spring, that is to say about the time when she settles at Seaux, she will carry out the project she had formerly made. Meanwhile she will have an opportunity of speaking upon the subject to the Duchesse de la Ferté, from whose mouth it is indispensable for her to learn that you are at liberty to contemplate a new engagement. This is a duty of

civility to which the Duchesse du Maine considers herself bound. I shall be delighted, Mademoiselle, when the affair is concluded according to your wishes. A delay of two or three months will not make it fail. I am, Mademoiselle, beyond all expression, yours etc.'

This letter assured me of my fate, which I did not then foresee would be such as it ultimately proved. I remained, however, eight months longer at the Presentation. I went out but little, fearing that I might receive orders that would not find me, or that my conduct might be deemed suspicious. I heard nothing more until four or five months later.

I have preserved only a confused remembrance of the manner in which this interval was occupied. I only know that M. de Silly, having heard about me from his mother, wrote me the following letter from the army, with which he then was.

Letter.

At the Camp of Follew, this 17th of August.

'I thought that you knew me better than you do. What leads you to suppose that position regulates my esteem and friendship. I know too well that fortune depends more on chance or circumstances than on merit. I rejoice at your hopes. I shall rejoice still more when you are placed as I wish.

'Consideration is the road to everything; I entreat you to make prompt use of it. Envy follows it closely at a time when few deserve it. I beg also that you will strive to please, to be conciliatory, and not to exhibit more of your wit than is suitable to those with whom you are speaking; above all do not allow yourself to be thought capable of ruling. Be content to prove yourself sensible and possessed of agreeable talents. This is much more valued than wit; the former pleases, and the latter arouses fear. I am certain you have thought of all I say, and I merely repeat it to show that I think with you.

'Send me tidings of yourself especially, and count on my interest in all that concerns you. Adieu, Mademoiselle.'

I was beginning to be uneasy at hearing nothing, when my sister brought me a letter from the Duchesse de la Ferté, and this one from Monsieur de Malesieu.

Letter.

'At last, Mademoiselle, the time has come. The Duchesse du Maine commands me to inform you in her name that you can come in three or four days. The Duchesse de la Ferté lately spoke so highly of you that she has decided to delay no longer. I look forward with great pleasure, Made-

moiselle, to having it shortly in my power to render you some small services, and to prove that I am, beyond expression, your very humble, etc.'

At Seaux, the 11th of September, 1711.

I do not insert the previous letter written to me by Madame de la Ferté, although it is still in my possession, for I do not consider it worthy either of her or of me. She desired me to repair to Seaux the following morning, that she might present me herself to their Serene Highnesses. Having given me these two letters, my sister informed me that one of the Duchesse du Maine's dressers had retired; that her place was considered good enough for me, whose reputation was gone by; and that the Duchesse de la Ferté, finding an opportunity of revenging herself, had encouraged the proposal, and was gloating over the prospect of presenting me on this footing.

I looked upon this event as my ruin, and I felt that the indelible character of a lady's-maid would prohibit any return of fortune. However, there was no means of escape. I could not belie the negotiation I had made to enter the service of the Duchesse du Maine, nor insist on terms with a person of her position. I found myself hated by the Duchesse de la Ferté as much as I had formerly been beloved, without help and without re-

source. There was nothing for it but to submit to the yoke.

I therefore went to Seaux, and placed myself at the orders of the Duchesse de la Ferté. She led me as in triumph, and presented me to the Princess, who scarcely looked at me. She proceeded to drag me bound to her chariot-wheels to all the people to whom I had been introduced. I followed her with the countenance of a vanquished captive. This ceremony accomplished, she told me that I had no further need of her, and that in future she did not wish to have anything to do with me. I felt the loss of her affection more than the effects of her resentment.

I spent this first day in a state of mental distraction that has left me no distinct recollection. I only know that I was strangely surprised on seeing the abode intended for me. It was an entresol so low and dark that I could only walk bent double and groping my way; it was impossible to breathe for want of air, or to keep warm for want of a fireplace. This lodging was so unbearable that I made a representation to Monsieur de Malesieu. He paid no attention. All the civilities he had shown me, and all the regard he had testified, were followed by the contempt commonly felt for the serving class. I did not again expose myself to his disdain. Now that I was held so cheap, all the

rest of the household who had formerly paid me attention, abandoned me in like manner.

I entered upon my new vocations. The duty allotted to me was to make shifts. I was greatly perplexed. I had never done any but the fancy work executed in convents as an amusement, and I knew nothing of any other. I consumed as much time in taking measures as in carrying out this grand enterprise, and when the Duchesse du Maine put on her shift, she found the elbow where the arm-hole ought to have been. She asked who had executed this masterpiece; she was told that it had been done by me. She replied with perfect composure that I did not know how to work, and that this labour must be given to some one else. I was consoled for my bad success by its results. In good faith I had done the best I could, yet with all my good will I filled my office ill. I have often wondered how this Princess, although little inured to patience, tolerated my blunders.

The first time that I gave her something to drink, I poured the water over her instead of putting it into the glass. My extreme shortsightedness, combined with the trepidation which I always felt on approaching her, made me seem devoid of all comprehension of the most simple matters. She told me one day to bring her some rouge and a little cup of water which was on her dressing-table.

I went into her room and stood there lost, not knowing which way to turn. The Princesse de Guise came through by chance, and found me in this predicament. 'What are you doing there?' said she. 'Oh, Madame,' said I, 'some rouge—a cup—a dressing-table; I see none of them.' Touched by my distress, she put into my hand what, without her help, I should have sought in vain.

I will recount a few more of my strangest mistakes, which seem like imbecility. The Duchesse du Maine, while at her toilet, asked me to give her some powder. I took the box by the lid; it naturally fell, and the powder was scattered over the dressing-table and over the Princess, who said very gently, 'When you take up anything, it ought to be by the bottom.' I remembered this lesson so well that a few days later, when she asked me for her purse, I took it by the bottom, and was much surprised to see about a hundred louis which it contained, covering the floor. I no longer knew how to take hold of anything.

I also let fall a parcel of trinkets, which I no less foolishly took by the middle. It may be imagined with what contempt my absurdities were regarded by my skilled and trained companions.

I did what I could to gain their good graces. Civility required me to live with them, and necessity obliged me to do so. The cold was beginning

to make itself felt, and there was but one wardrobe in common, in which there was a fire. Hence I spent a part of the day in their society. I endeavoured to adapt my conversation to theirs. I said what I thought would suit them. But whether I was not lucky in my attempts, or whether I did not catch their tone quickly enough, I incurred their displeasure. I had no dislike to them, only a little distaste, but I preferred to brave the cold rather than the annoyance of their ill-humour and the weariness of their conversation. So I shut myself up in my den, and consoled myself with reading.

I was not in sole possession of this lodging, for the chief dresser, who slept at night in the Duchesse du Maine's apartment, shared it with me by day. She had her hours for sleeping, and times that she wished to spend with her husband. At first I took up my abode in an arbour, until cold and rain left me no refuge but the passages. My dwelling at Versailles, where we spent the winter, was still more unbearable. No ray of light had ever penetrated into it. A companion more uncongenial than the one I had at Seaux was there by day and night. The want of space obliged us constantly to dispute the territory, and the smoke compelled us to abandon it.

The two women with whom I alternately lodged were not friends. It was impossible to conciliate

one without alienating the other. To avoid civil war I exposed myself to foreign wars, and changed my treaties with an inconstancy regulated by the succession of the seasons. I would fain have made any concessions, but the most skilful politician would have failed. One may gain some influence with people of consistent opinions, known interests, and ordinary feelings; but it is not the same with the sort of minds whose ideas are topsy-turvy, whose motions are contradictory, and whose base interests are hidden in the dust.

My sister, however, vexed that I should not have the full approbation of the body of lady's-maids, gave me notice that they found me cold and reserved; that it was regarded as pride and haughtiness, and that I must put an end to these unfavourable reports. I had become so docile that I said, 'Well, what am I to do?' 'You must pay visits,' she replied, 'to the strange lady's-maids who are staying in the house, and you must be very civil to them.' 'Very good,' said I, 'let us go where you please.' Delighted to find me so well disposed, she took me at once to a large gathering of these women. Some were playing at cards, and others looking on. I sat down among those who were unoccupied, and selected my next neighbour for the object of my eloquence. I broke out into compliments, flatteries, and ingratiating airs; in short I

searched far and wide for suitable topics. It succeeded badly; for it so chanced that the woman I had chosen as my stalking-horse was of the lowest class of this order of intellect. My want of discernment became a subject of ridicule. It is true their countenances were all as much alike as a flock of sheep. At Versailles my sister dragged me again to the attendants of the Duc d'Anjou, whom I thought still more conceited. They asked if I had many perquisites; how much of this, how much of that; all things of which I knew nothing, and of which my ignorance made me appear stupid. But this is enough and too much of my profession.

It was scarcely a fortnight since I had taken possession of my place, when the Marquis de Silly, who thought it was a better one, wrote me the following letter of congratulation.

Letter.

'Although it is a long time since I have heard of you, Mademoiselle, I am always truly interested in all that concerns you. I am delighted that you are permanently installed with the Duchesse du Maine. I wished you to have the place you are about to occupy from the moment I first heard there was a question of it. I only regret that you will not come often enough to the places which I inhabit. I have not forgotten the pleasure it is to

be in your society, and I know by experience that it is difficult to find . . . . but I perceive that I am praising you too much, and I do not want to spoil you. I believe, however, that this precaution is useless. You know your own worth. Adieu, Mademoiselle. I have a great wish to see you.'

This token of a remembrance always equally precious to me, gave me as much satisfaction as I was then capable of feeling. But a life so hard, so repulsive, so different from that which I had formerly led, threw me into a state of despondency that was perceptible in my countenance. That alone was able to betray me, for I spoke to no one. The Duchesse du Maine complained of my doleful face, and Monsieur de Malesieu told du Verney to let me know. He came to Seaux occasionally, and had bestowed strange praises upon me. His passion for anatomy having persuaded him that this science was the basis of true merit, to exalt mine he had announced that in all France I was the woman best acquainted with the human body. The Duchesse de la Ferté, now as eager to render me ridiculous as she had formerly been to gain me appreciation, did not allow this point in his eulogium to escape her. In the fulfilment of his mission, du Verney exhorted me to bear the present evil, in the hope of a more propitious future. He predicted that I should be known, esteemed, and respected; that I

should gain the confidence of the Princess, and that her kindness would be the certain result. I believed him no more than I did the almanack. I was incapable of anything, even of saying a word. The Duchesse du Maine never spoke once to me, and seemed to have no idea that I was able either to understand or to answer. I had occasion to feel how little I was appreciated, by a joke that I ventured to make.

The Princess, some years after getting possession of Seaux, had instituted an Order of the Honey Bee, with its laws, its statutes, and a fixed number of knights and ladies, who were elected by a chapter with great ceremony. When a vacancy occurred all the people of the Court vied to obtain it. The case happened when I had been six or seven months in her household. A great number of claimants offered themselves; amongst others the Countesses de Brassac and d'Uzez, and the Président de Romanet. The latter carried the day, to the prejudice of the ladies, who affected great indignation, and complained that the election had not been according to regulation. This suggested to me the idea of inditing, in their name, a protest in legal terms and in a feigned hand, which I sent to the President by an unknown channel. I confided this secret to no one, and I had the amusement of witnessing the anxiety shown to discover whence this writing came.

It was attributed first to Monsieur de Malesieu, or to the Abbé de Genest, and next to the persons concerned. It was ascertained that they had no share in it. At last the suspicion descended to the most incapable people in the household without ever reaching me, while I contented myself with enjoying the general perplexity and hearing it constantly discussed during the fortnight spent in this bootless search.

The humiliation of my position tinged even the praises I received. I was profoundly mortified by a compliment paid to me by Monsieur de Lassay. The Duchesse du Maine, while undressing, let some louis fall from her pocket. I picked them up and placed them on her dressing-table. 'Your Highness has very trustworthy attendants,' said Lassay, looking at me. I looked down confused, saying to myself, 'Am I to receive praise such as this? How can I be satisfied?' These were only the petty sorrows consequent on my position, which encountered me at every turn. I experienced one of a very different character in the death of an intimate friend. I received the following letter from the Abbé de Vertot at a time when I was least expecting such melancholy tidings:—

Letter.

'I am sorry to be obliged to announce to you the loss we have lately experienced of Monsieur Brunel, your friend and mine. You, Mademoiselle, lose more than any of us, for he esteemed you more than anyone in the world. If feelings of respect could be a compensation for what you lose in the way of merit, I should take the liberty of offering you an inviolable attachment. Monsieur de Fontenelle is inconsolable. There is no more question of philosophy. Nature and a good heart have regained their rights. He is truly to be pitied: and you are no less so. I trust that that austere Reason of which I sometimes complain may not play you false on such a melancholy occasion. I have the honour to be,' etc.

Monsieur Brunel died at Rouen, of pleurisy, on the 1st of December.

My grief was as keen as it was well-founded. I had lost an old friend whose merits were worthy of honour, and who deserved my feelings by his own, and I had the misfortune of having wounded his affection by the abatement which he had remarked in mine. The fancy that possessed me, the distraction occasioned by so many new objects, had produced a great change in my sentiments. He had noticed it in a journey which he made to Paris during my

residence there, and had been justly hurt by it. I failed to perceive his vexation, and had no thought of conciliating him. But a letter which he wrote me a short time before his death made me aware of my misdeeds, and aggravated my regret at the loss I had experienced, which was the greater as he was about to settle in Paris, and when I recovered my reason my old feelings would have returned. I was deeply affected at the loss of such a friend, and shall always continue to lament him. He had lent me money without a receipt when I had thought myself able to accept it with the certainty of repayment. Since I had had some money of my own I had never remembered to fulfil this duty, and luckily I was in possession of this small amount. I went to Monsieur de Fontenelle to beg him to remit it to the heirs. I found him in a state of grief which gave me pleasure, for it did honour to my friend. He told me long afterwards that he had never been able to replace his loss, and, like him, I have never found a person of so much merit.

The melancholy and wearisome life that I led constantly occupied my mind with the means of escaping from it. I spent days and nights in these reflections. The few people who took interest in me also endeavoured to find some solution to suggest. I was offered a situation as governess with a German princess on profitable and honourable terms.

I was much tempted to accept. However, not wishing to trust to my own judgment, I consulted the Abbé de Vertot, the only friend I had left. His sensible answer, the uncertainty of promises, the difficulties he held up to me, determined me to refuse the offer. One still stranger was made to me shortly afterwards.

An agreeable woman with whom I was intimate came one day to see me at Seaux, and said, 'I know that your hopes have not been realised in the situation that you occupy; that you dislike it extremely, and that you only think of leaving it. I have come to offer you another. There is a person in the world ready to settle a sum of money, on reliable security, sufficient to enable you to afford a small apartment at Paris, and enough to live comfortably, with a few servants to wait upon you. Nothing is required of you except that there should be a door in your apartment communicating with another house, and that you will give admittance to a lady who will be your friend and will visit you frequently.' This time I did not require advice as to my answer, which, as may be supposed, was a most decisive negative. The lady insisted. I asked no questions, not thinking it advisable to fathom the mystery. All that I could suppose was that people were concerned who did not regard expense if their mutual intelligence were concealed.

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A third proposal was made to me by one of the greatest nobles of the realm. The Princess his wife, who was, like himself, very intimate at our Court, signified to me his desire to make further acquaintance with me, and requested me to receive his visits. The channel through which this request was conveyed obliged me to acquiesce. I saw him; he pitied my position, offered to release me from it, proposed to establish me in his house with every sort of comfort, and a share in the education of his daughters. Again I was tempted, and again I consulted my Abbé. He returned me an answer as sensible as the former. It pointed to a refusal. The too great eagerness which I noticed in the offers rendered them suspicious, and decided me not to accept.

These openings for my resignation, always closed around by the barriers with which I had surrounded myself, only served to make me feel the impossibility of escaping from my misfortunes. I soon experienced a new one which was extremely painful. There was at Seaux a Madame de M——, who was employed to act the part of confidant in the plays. At first she had offered me the use of her room in place of the woods in which I took refuge. The cold had driven me from them, as hunger drives the wolves. I had accepted this offer the more readily as I went to her room only when she was not there, yet it gave me an appearance of intimacy with this woman. She had

been very handsome. Her husband, thinking her so still, continued to be extremely jealous. As she was averse to living with him, she begged the Duchesse du Maine, when she was going to Versailles, to take her with her and lodge her in her house. She spent her days at the Castle, and asked leave to go to my room when she had anything to do. I consented, not being able to refuse to her at Versailles the hospitality which she had exercised towards me at Seaux. One day, when I was in the Duchesse du Maine's apartment, she asked me for the key of the entresol; I gave it to her, and went up soon after. I was surprised to find her then drinking coffee with a Swiss officer, named Diesbach, who was one of our courtiers. I laughingly reproached her, for I did not suspect any artifice, and I really believe there was none. However, the jealous husband having come to see her, was told that she was in my room. He came up, and on finding Diesbach he carried off his wife in a transport of rage, although my comrade and I were present. According to her own statement he maltreated her to such a degree as to force her to seek refuge in a convent. Unfortunately for me, she chose the one whence I came, and, to acquire a right to enter it, she wrote a letter to the Minister in which she accused her husband, at one time a Protestant, of endangering her faith. I was ignorant of all this. The Duchesse du Maine having gone for some days

to the Arsenal, where she did not take me, I went to stay with Madame de Vauvray. We were at table, when, to my surprise, a servant in our livery made his appearance. He told me that Her Serene Highness desired me to come to her at the house of the First President, where she then was. This was Monsieur de Mesmes. I arrived without knowing what was the matter. I beheld severe countenances on all sides. A letter was read to me from Monsieur de M——, accusing me of having long conducted an intrigue on the part of his wife and M. Diesbach, whom he had surprised in my room. To enforce his accusation, he said that having been brought up by the Maréchale de la Ferté (whom I had never seen), it was not surprising that I should be fit for such an office.

I frankly related the fact as it took place; I affirmed (and it was true) that it was the only time that these two persons had met in my room; that I had no knowledge, not even the slightest suspicion, of any connection between them; for the rest that I had never had any other education than that of the convent where I had been from my birth until my installation with Her Serene Highness. No great attention was paid to my defence, and I heard it said, 'One would not have thought it of her.' I should still less have thought of ever being subjected to such an accusation.

After this examination I was sent back to Madame de Vauvray's, where I met the next day with another humiliation of a less serious nature. She wished me to stand sponsor, with her son, to the child of one of her servants. The Curé who performed the baptism thought me so stupid that he asked whether I was able to sign my name properly. It is true I had not been able to tell him to what parish I belonged, nor to answer any question that he asked me.

We returned to Versailles, where the affair of Madame de M—— made a great sensation. Her husband had been put in prison in consequence of the letter she had written against him. I found myself unpleasantly implicated in this affair. I was the more distressed as I was little known in the world, and that was a bad introduction. I received many rebuffs in my misfortune. Mademoiselle Nanette, one of my comrades, obligingly said to me, 'This occurrence is very disagreeable for us all. People talk of one of the Duchesse du Maine's women, and one finds oneself confounded.' I was myself so confounded by having to live with *her*, that it would never have occurred to me that this misfortune in any way concerned her.

In the absence of any other protection, the truth and my own innocence supported me and dissipated the impression in my disfavour. I was forbidden ever

to see Madame de M——, and I readily consented. The sight of her would have been as odious to me as was that of Diesbach, at whom I shuddered the first time I met him, remembering the troubles in which he had involved me.

These redoubled misfortunes, discomforts without number, vexations superadded to a humiliating position, equally insupportable to a body and mind of peculiar susceptibility; these, combined with an infatuated passion which excited none but painful feelings, gave me a horror of life. The desire for release neutralised all reasons to the contrary. Opinion almost always conforms itself to the view favoured by the feelings, and one sees only what one wishes to see. Thus I came to think that I ought to quit a life which it seemed to me I was no longer able to endure. The feeling which dwelt at the bottom of my heart (though perhaps this was not its true habitation) desired to make itself known before it was extinguished, and inspired me to announce my design by letter to the person who was, in part, the cause of it. I wrote. When I had so far given way to my folly my reason returned, and I resolved to live. I did not send the letter, but I kept it as a testimony against myself, both of my delusion and of the delusions into which it is possible to fall by giving way to the feelings. Here it is :—

Letter.

'It is five years ago since I saw you for the first time. You treated me with an indifference verging on contempt. In my irritation I sought out your defects, and I thus discovered your merits. I wished to hate you, and I loved you. I endeavoured to conceal from you feelings to which I well knew you would not respond. Yet I could not bear that your insensibility should prevent your knowing of their existence. Your slightest attentions touched me most profoundly, and I was so ready to put everything to your credit, that your coldness aroused my gratitude. I regarded it as a precaution to root out of my heart, hopes alike useless and dangerous. You might even have been cruel to me without doing anything but increase the esteem I felt for you; an esteem so perfect and so respectful, that it led me to condemn my wish to please without depriving me of the desire. Neither prolonged absence, change of fortune, nor the aid of cultivated reason have been able to change my feelings. I have done more than this. I resolved to see, and I have seen, all that is considered most attractive. How different it seemed to me from you! No one is like you; and nothing is comparable to the feeling that you inspire. I cannot accustom myself to see people who love one another, and I cannot understand how it is possible

to love anyone if it is not you that one loves. But what do you think of the avowal I am making? As for me, I am not ashamed of it. Feelings such as mine are respectable in their way. I do not seek to touch your heart; I only wish to tell you what I am to you, and to let you know that I am resolved to put an end to my troubles. I feel too strongly that I belong to you to dispose of myself without rendering you an account. I await one word from you, and that is all I wait for, before bidding you farewell for ever.'

It was some years since I had seen Monsieur de Silly or heard his name spoken. Some one having mentioned him by accident, I was so much affected that, wishing a moment later to leave the room, my strength failed me, and I nearly fell. I have often wondered that a feeling, deprived of all sustenance, could have retained so much force.

An occurrence in which I ought to have taken no interest caused me to emerge unexpectedly from the profound obscurity in which I lived. A woman, Mademoiselle Tétard, by name, excited the curiosity of the public by a supposed prodigy which took place at her house. All the world went there. Among others M. de Fontenelle, at the request of the Duke of Orleans, went to see the miracle. It was said that he had not taken with him eyes sufficiently philosophical; murmurs were heard, and the

Duchesse du Maine, who rarely took any notice of me, told me that I ought to inform M. de Fontenelle of what was said against him with regard to Mademoiselle Tétard. I wrote to him without any thought but of extracting an answer that might serve to justify him. He happened that day to be at the house of the Marquis de Lassay, where the company joked him on the same subject. Not admiring the jests, he said, 'Here are some better ones,' and showed them my letter. It had a great success. It became the affair of the day; copies were taken, and it went the round of Paris. I had not heard of the incident, and was greatly surprised when, some days afterwards, a large party having come to Seaux to see a play, everyone talked to the Duchesse du Maine of this letter. She had forgotten her observation, and did not know what it was all about. She asked me if I had written it, and I said yes. As soon as she had spoken to me all the party flocked to me, and, to pay court to her, overwhelmed me with compliments; then returning to her, they congratulated her on having in her service a person of whom she could make such pleasant use. Until that moment, it had never occurred to her. She wanted to see the letter, and asked me for it. I had no copy, but everyone else had it in their pockets. She read it, approved of it, and became aware that she could make more use of me than she did. Like

the rest of the world, I wished for a copy of my letter, and I valued it for its results. It proves that success is due more to appropriateness than to the importance of the occasion. Here is the letter from Mademoiselle de L. to Monsieur de Fontenelle:—

'Mademoiselle Tétard's adventure makes less sensation, Monsieur, than the testimony which you have rendered to it. The various opinions maintained compel me to address you on the subject. People are surprised, and perhaps justly, that the destroyer of the Oracles, he who has overturned the tripod of the Sibyls, should have prostrated himself before the couch of Mademoiselle Tétard. It is in vain to say that the incantations and not the fascinations of the young lady were the inducement, for neither the one nor the other are of any value to a philosopher. Everyone is talking about it. What! say the critics, this man who is so clear-sighted as to the juggleries performed a thousand miles away and two thousand years ago, was unable to discover a trick played under his very eyes! The partisans of antiquity, animated by an old resentment, come to the charge: "You will see," say they, "he wants to put new miracles above the old ones." Lastly, the most refined declare that as a good Pyrrhonist, holding everything uncertain, you believe everything to be possible. On the other hand, the devout seem highly edified at the homage you have

rendered to the Devil, and they hope that it may not stop there. The women too are grateful to you for the small dread you have shown of the artifices of their sex. For myself, Monsieur, I suspend my judgment until I am further enlightened. I merely remark that the special attention bestowed on your slightest actions is an incontestable proof of the esteem entertained for you by the public, and even in its censure I perceive something flattering enough to relieve me from the dread of committing an indiscretion when I apprise you of it. If you will repay my confidence with your own, I will promise to make good use of it. I have the honour to be,' etc.

I own I felt great satisfaction in deriving from a thing undesignedly done, and without trouble, that which perhaps I should never have obtained by real labour, for I had not merely gained the approbation of the moment, but the curiosity to see me procured me society and friends of distinction. Yet nothing gave me pleasure so keen as the receipt of the following letter from Monsieur de Silly :—

Letter.

'At Fribourg, this 20th of December, 1713.

'Your letter to Monsieur de Fontenelle makes a sensation as great as the adventure of Mademoiselle Tétard. . It is a monument which secures its remem

brance. It will spread to the most barbarous nations. All the Germans who are here want copies of it. It is not right of you to allow me to learn through the public an incident that concerns you, and procures you the approbation of those whose approval is worth having. In future, treat me with more confidence, and do not let me learn through others what interests me so deeply. This occurrence should induce you to do so, for the decision of the public confirms what I have so often told you. Adieu, Mademoiselle. Remember that I am here.'

His attention being re-awakened by the success I had in the world, he renewed his intercourse with me, all the more gladly as, being detained in a German town of which he was in command, and where he spent eight years, he was desirous of receiving tidings from France through various channels. He intimated the pleasure I should give him by sending him regularly any news that I might hear. I wrote to him with equal assiduity and circumspection. I tried nevertheless to make my letters agreeable. His became much like the correspondence with one's agents: 'I have received yours of the so and so. Continue to let me know what is happening. You omitted to give me information respecting such and such a thing.' Nothing more. Nevertheless the handwriting, the very seal, enchanted me. I awaited with the greatest impatience the day and the hour

for receiving the despatches, and I remember a dispute I had at Versailles with the postman who brought me one of his letters, and who would neither take my money nor give it to me without, because neither he nor I had change. In vain I told him that I did not care for change ; he insisted on going away, saying coldly, 'I will come back presently.' It was early morning. 'Why,' said my comrade, awakened by the noise we made, 'is not a letter as good at one time as another ?' She magnanimously gave a few sous to quiet us and to get to sleep again

My sudden reputation, as I have already said, attracted the curious around me. Among others the Abbé de Chaulieu, who sometimes came to Seaux, and who would never have thought of uttering a word to me, was desirous of conversing with me. The same good luck which had suddenly gained me appreciation followed me in the examination. Whether it was prejudice on the part of others or my own desire to preserve what chance had procured for me, I did not discredit myself, as I believe, in the opinion of anyone. On the same occasion I acquired a firm friend who never failed me. This was Monsieur de Valincourt, who was attached to the Comte de Toulouse, and known for his wit, his merits, and his intimacy with illustrious people of the last century. He wished to make acquaintance with me, and tried to find me at Fontainebleau, whither we

had gone, but it was no easy matter to discover me under the staircase, where I made my abode. At last, having come to Seaux one day, he found himself seated next to me at the play, and we entered into a conversation in which he seemed to take pleasure. He came to the play again, and I took care to keep the same place for him. He was touched by my attention; and some time after, when I was at Versailles, he wrote to ask leave to call upon me. I was of a sociable disposition, and readily consented.

About the same time the Duchesse du Maine asked Cardinal de Polignac, with whom she was very intimate, to give, in French, an explanation of his 'Anti-Lucretius,' which was written in Latin verse. Every evening she assembled in her closet a number of chosen persons to hear him. Monsieur de Valincourt was one of these, and used to come to my room to await the hour of this learned gathering. The reasons for admitting me were as yet insufficient to counterbalance those which excluded me from everything. Some time previously I had asked permission to attend the reading given at Seaux of the first book of this work, translated by the Duc du Maine, and I had the mortification of obtaining leave, on condition that I did not appear. Henceforth I took care to make no more indiscreet requests. The esteem of those who began to know me, consoled me for the invincible

contempt felt by the great for those whose position is inferior to their own. But this habit of disdain, which affects only the position of others, sometimes reacts upon their own characters, while the splendour with which they are surrounded fails to redeem them. This reflection does not apply to the Duchesse du Maine, who has always had more respect for merit than is common with persons of her rank.

The little epoch which I have noted was for me the commencement of a life in every way more agreeable. Her Serene Highness henceforth condescended to speak to me, and acquired the habit of doing so. She was pleased with my answers, and valued my approbation; I even perceived that she sought for it, for in speaking her eyes frequently turned towards me and watched for my attention. I was ready to give her the whole of it, for no one ever spoke more correctly, neatly, and rapidly, nor in a manner more noble and natural. Her mind makes use of no turn or metaphor, nor of anything like invention. Vividly struck by objects, it reflects them like a mirror, without adding, omitting, or altering anything. I therefore had great pleasure in listening to her, and from the time she became aware of it, she was pleased with my appreciation.

The position of her family was at that time as high as she had been able to raise it. From the

time of her marriage with the Duc du Maine she had been constantly occupied with obtaining for him and her children a rank equal to her own ; step by step they had reached all the honours of Princes of the Blood, and, favoured by circumstances, they had obtained the famous edict which called them and their posterity to the succession of the Crown. The precipitate loss of so many princes of the royal family had occasioned and facilitated this project, which was executed at the time without opposition, and afterwards gave rise to so much. But the present prosperity, veiling the fall for which it was preparing the way, spread rejoicing in the Court.

The Princess's taste for pleasure was then at its height, and the only thought was how to give a new flavour to the entertainments, so as to render them more exciting. Comedies were acted or rehearsed every day. The nights also were brought into play, with appropriate diversions. These were called the Great Nights. Their beginning, like that of everything else, was very simple. The Duchesse du Maine, being partial to late hours, frequently spent the whole night in playing at different games. The Abbé du Vaubrun, one of the courtiers most eager to ingratiate himself, thought fit to make some one appear on one of these occasions in the guise of Night, enveloped in its robes, and offering a thanksgiving to the Princess for the preference which she

accorded to it over the day. The goddess was to have an attendant, who was to sing a beautiful song on the same subject. The Abbé confided this secret to me, and asked me to compose and pronounce the harangue, in the character of the nocturnal divinity. The surprise was the only merit of this little diversion. It was ill executed on my part. I was seized with a fear of speaking in public, and remembered little of what I had to say. The idea was applauded however, and hence arose splendid fêtes, given at night by different individuals, to the Duchesse du Maine. I made bad verses for some of them, and plots for several others, and I was consulted upon all. I acted, I sang; but my shyness spoilt it all, and it was thought better to employ me only in the consultation, in which I succeeded so well that I derived great benefit from it.

The last of these fêtes was entirely mine, and was given in my name, though I did not pay the expenses. It represented Good Taste taking refuge at Seaux and presiding at the various occupations of the Princess. First he brought the Graces, who prepared a costume while dancing. Others sang songs of which the words were adapted to the subject. This was the first act. It was followed by the Games personified, bringing card-tables and arranging all the requisites for play; the whole intermingled with dances and songs by the best actors of

the Opera. Finally, in the last act, after the choruses were over, Laughter appeared, arranging a theatre, on which was represented a comedy in one act, which I was made to write, as no poet (for it was to be in verse) could be induced to accept such a subject. The topic was the discovery which the Duchesse du Maine aspired to make of the magic square, to which she had for some time past applied herself with surprising ardour. The piece was acted by herself, everyone assuming their own character, which made it popular, notwithstanding the dryness of the subject, and would have rendered me popular too, had not important events suddenly interrupted these diversions and obliterated even their memory.

My rise in the world, however, procured me some return of the good graces of the Duchesse de la Ferté. My first successes annoyed her, but at last the good opinion of the public revived hers, and it was for this that I valued it most. The distress of being on bad terms with her had struck my imagination so profoundly that as long as her anger lasted I dreamed every night either of fresh grievances on her part or of my reconciliation with her. It is true I never regained her affection, but I used to see her, and she treated me with kindness and familiarity. It was after the return of her favour that she said to me one day, 'There, child, I see no one but myself who is always right.' This

speech more than any other has served to teach me self-distrust, and I remember it every time that I am tempted to think that I am in the right.

It then became more easy for me to see my sister, whose society I liked, though it was not devoid of thorns. In short, everything was going better with me, when the famous epoch occurred which made a total change in our mode of life.

The King, Louis XIV., had been failing for some time. Nothing was said, and the courtiers pretended to believe nothing. The Duchesse du Maine, however, amidst the amusements and pleasures which seemed to occupy her entirely, was always alive to the aggrandisement of the house to which she had allied herself, and to the establishment of its grandeur, and she felt how important it was in the present conjuncture to ascertain the dispositions made by the King. She urged the Duc du Maine to beg Madame de Maintenon, who retained the affection of a governess for the legitimised Princes, to induce the King to apprise them of the contents of his will, in order that they might take suitable steps ; or even to persuade him to make the fittest arrangements, during his lifetime, for giving stability to their elevation. Madame de Maintenon eluded this application for fear of the royal displeasure. Overcome, however, by the entreaties of the Duc du Maine, she prevailed on the

King to allow the Duke and his brother to see the will; but on the condition that they would reveal none of its articles to anybody whatever. They considered that this inviolable secrecy would render the information useless, and they declined the offer. This was a fatal error, of which the Duchesse du Maine felt the full scope. To endeavour to repair the mistake, a council was called, consisting of the First President de Mesmes, Messrs. de Malesieu and de Valincourt, in presence of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse. They decided that, as it was impossible to cancel the refusal, information must be demanded on some one article of importance. Opinions were divided as to the subject. That to which the Comte de Toulouse inclined, whether His Majesty reinstated the King of Spain to the succession, carried the day.

It was ascertained that he was not reinstated, which infallibly secured the authority of the Duke of Orleans, and it was apparently to gain favour with him that the inquiry was made. This was a second mistake, no less injurious to the interests of the Princes than the first. It was imprudently turning the discovery to the advantage of him who was to profit by it at their expense.

The necessity of an alliance with the Duke of Orleans was obvious. This was strongly urged by

the Duchesse du Maine. Her arguments were unheeded, for it was supposed that such a connection would be displeasing to the King.

The Duke of Orleans, who was not yet aware of the future arrangements, and not certain of upsetting them so easily as he did, paid court to the Duc du Maine. He had even contemplated marrying his daughter, Mademoiselle de Valois, to the Prince de Dombes. The Duc de Brancas, one of his favourites, spoke to me on the subject long before the catastrophe, and told me that I ought to suggest the idea to the Duchesse du Maine. I did not fail to repeat what had been said, but she seemed to pay little heed. Secret reasons had made her look coldly on this proposal, which had moreover been already made both to her and to the Duc du Maine. Not sufficiently convinced of the absolute power which the Duke of Orleans could not fail to obtain, and more impressed with the small drawbacks than with the great advantages connected with this alliance, they neglected it, or at least they did not take enough pains to obtain the consent of the King, who did not favour it.

The Duke of Orleans, repulsed and better informed, turned his views in another direction. He sought to ingratiate the grandees of the nation. Prodigal of his promises, he pledged himself to do everything they could desire when he became

master. He gained the Parliament by similar means, and employed countless secret intrigues to make himself followers and friends among its members, who afterwards proved of great service to him.

The First President was to all appearance devoted to the House of Maine. But he rendered it little help. He was a great courtier but a commonplace man; agreeable in society, weak, timid, full of those faults which often please yet are an impediment to usefulness.

The sickly King at last fell dangerously ill. His death threatened so many misfortunes to the Duc du Maine and his family that nothing else was thought of. The Duchesse du Maine rushed to Versailles. Distress and anxiety succeeded to the rejoicings and pleasures which had hitherto followed one another. She saw Madame de Maintenon, and urged her to enlighten her as to what it was so important for her to know. She refused to impart anything or to listen to the measures which she was required to suggest to the King in order to secure his own enactments in favour of the legitimised princes. The anxiety to spare him, the fear of losing him, neutralised all other interests in the eyes of the favourite. During his illness he conferred of his own accord a distinction on the Duc du Maine, at which the Duke of Orleans felt much aggrieved. He had

previously ordered a review of his household troops; and not being able to be present on the day named, he appointed the Duc du Maine to take his place. This climax of honour seemed a presage of his ruin, and, it may be, served to accelerate it.

At last the Prince learnt from the King himself, a few days before his death, what were the dispositions of his will. It was too late to profit by the information. The Duc du Maine could only represent to the King the difficulties prepared for him, and the dissatisfaction that would be felt by the Duke of Orleans, who was too well able to increase his power to be offended with impunity. The King, however, persisted in refusing to alter the dispositions of his will.

He established a Council of Regency, of which he appointed the members, with the Duke of Orleans as the chief. Everything was to be decided by the majority of votes. He entrusted to the Council the guardianship of the young king, the superintendence of his education, the charge of his person; and the command of his household troops to the Duc du Maine. This measure of authority would have enabled him to sustain himself had he been able to preserve it. But it is well known that the power of kings, however absolute, does not extend beyond the grave. Weary of obeying them, people are ready to evade laws which are without support,

and severely shaken by the interests of a new master.

Louis XIV. having died on September 1, the meeting of Parliament, in which the Regency was to be settled, was held the next morning at the palace. Notwithstanding arrangements to the contrary, the chief authority was conferred on the Duke of Orleans, with a Council of Regency, without which he could do nothing. Gratified at being the chief, and agitated by this unexpected success, he lost his head, and pledged himself in his speech to leave all the power to the Council. A clever man, devoted to the interests of the new Regent, and present at the meeting, perceived the injury he was doing himself, and adroitly sent him a note intimating that he was ruined if he did not immediately break up the sitting. On some pretext or other it was adjourned to the afternoon. The Duke of Orleans availed himself of the interval to confer with his friends. A speech was arranged for him in which he demonstrated the disadvantages of divided authority and the necessity of entrusting it entirely to him, consenting, nevertheless, to take no steps in the affairs of the State without the deliberation of the Council of Regency, which must be chosen by him, while he was to be absolute master with regard to the distribution of favours.

All this was passed, and he said on this occasion

that he was delighted to find himself restricted from committing evil actions, and free to do good ones. It was enacted at the same sitting that the Duc du Maine should have the superintendence of the King's education; but, on renewed representations on the part of the Duke of Orleans, it was decided that he should not be allowed the command of the household troops.

Some of the members of the Parliament represented that it was indispensable to entrust the superintendent of the King's education with the command of his watch—that is to say, of the guard in daily attendance on his person—without which he could not be answerable for his safety. The Duc du Maine, therefore, demanded that he should be released by the Act of appointment from responsibility with regard to the King's person. He first obtained this article, but it was afterwards observed that it would be unbecoming for the Parliament to give him such a release, and he yielded the point. Deprived of all authority, this precious charge, which he did not long retain, was of no practical use to him. The young King, in a sitting of his 'Bed of Justice' a few days afterwards, confirmed the ordinances of his Parliament.

The Duchesse du Maine was anxious to be at Paris during this important crisis. She had no residence there, having hitherto had none but the

quarters of the Grand Master of the Artillery at the Arsenal, which had recently been destroyed for the purpose of rebuilding it. She borrowed the Hotel de Mesmes from the First President; and as there was not room enough for all her suite, she left me at Versailles. I signified to her my regret at not being with her in the present circumstances, and inquired whether she would approve of my seeking for some one who would give me a lodging in the neighbourhood, so as to be near her. She gladly consented. I applied to my comrade at the convent, who had brought me to Paris, and had promised that her house would be mine as soon as her marriage had taken place. She was now married, yet she refused to give me shelter even for a few days. My small experience of the world rendered her refusal surprising; since then I have learnt not to be so easily astonished. A brother of Madame de Grieu's, who lived in that neighbourhood with his niece, offered me a room, which I accepted. From him I had expected nothing. This surprise was a compensation for the other which he repaired. I remained there only a few days, the Duchesse du Maine having discovered a sort of cellar in the Hotel de Mesmes, in which I was lodged.

The anxieties of the present events had deprived her of rest. Not satisfied with the woman who told her stories to send her to sleep, she asked me to read

to her at night. I joyfully undertook this fatiguing office, considering it a means of gaining her confidence and obtaining more consideration and comfort. In this respect I was not disappointed, but I found my strength very inadequate to the onerous labour, which was repeated every night without intermission.

The Princess found that I read well and talked not amiss. She became accustomed to converse with me and being completely absorbed in the affairs of her family, these formed the sole topic of our nocturnal colloquies. Facts, schemes, grievances, and regrets were all included. This entire confidence touched me deeply, although I was aware that it was rather an outpouring of the mind than of the heart. The simple manifestation of esteem and affection, especially on the part of the great, never fails to charm us. I became really attached to my Princess, and I devoted myself to the task of pleasing her, as she required nothing from me that was not perfectly consonant with the esteem I wished her to feel for me.

We did not stay long at the Hotel de Mesmes. The King went first to Vincennes, and the Court was soon afterwards established at Paris. The superintendence of his education which had remained with the Duc du Maine, entitled him to a lodging at the Tuileries. The Duchesse du Maine

had quarters there also, in which we took up our abode. Only two large rooms were allotted to the women of her suite. According to my usual fate, my portion was a small den without light or warmth, except that of an antechamber which we had in common; but I was at last at Paris, where I had always wished to live; and notwithstanding the discomforts of my abode, I received good company in it. Since I have been in a position to entertain my friends more comfortably, I have seen nobody. I was young then, and that gives more than can be obtained when this precious advantage is lost.

The Abbé de Chaulieu, who was as much in love with me as it is possible to be at eighty, used to accuse me of coquetry. I assured him that it was due only to my need of pleasing, in order to render the hardships of my dwelling endurable to my guests. If I had not added something to my manners everybody would have deserted. I gave him my word, and I kept it, that when I had a window and a fireplace I would give up all endeavour to make myself agreeable.

This poor Abbé, who was blind, gave me credit, according to his taste, for all the charms most fitted to captivate him; and no longer reckoning on his own, he tried to make himself agreeable by dint of amiability and attention in forestalling all my wishes.

The Abbé often proposed to add gifts to the other incense which he offered me. Being annoyed one day with the eager entreaties with which he begged me to accept a thousand pistoles, I said: 'In gratitude for your generous offers I advise you not to make the like to many women; you might find one who would take you at your word.' 'Oh!' said he, 'I know to whom I am speaking.' This ingenuous answer made me laugh. He often exhorted me to indulge in finery, and tried to make me ashamed of not being better dressed. 'Abbé,' I used to say to him, 'I am as smart as I wish to be.' Having no resource but his attentions, he redoubled them constantly. He wrote to me every morning, and came to see me every afternoon, unless I declined his visit. The letter was to know my wishes, and when I preferred his carriage to his company he sent it to me without a murmur, and I had it completely at my disposal. I had absolute power over his whole household. It is rare to have entire authority without abusing it; on one occasion amongst others I exercised mine in behalf of a little page who used to bring me his letters. He came one day to inform me that his master had dismissed him. Without inquiring whether he was in fault or not, I said, 'Go back and tell him that you will remain, for that is my pleasure.' The Abbé submissively took him back. My protégé did no credit

to my protection; he behaved as ill as he could, and no one ventured to say a word.

When I vouchsafed to go and sup at the Temple with the Abbé or the Grand Prior, he collected the most agreeable people, and those I might like to see. In short, he only thought of filling my life with all the amusements of which it was susceptible, and he taught me that there is nothing so happy as to be loved by a person who has given up all pretensions and makes no claims.

I also saw almost daily, Monsieur de Valincourt, who, without assuming a tone of gallantry, testified a real affection for me. The high esteem I felt for him induced me to show him great preference; others were often offended, and interpreted my conduct according to their caprice, to which I thought fit to pay no attention. One of these was R——, who, after going the round of the world, had come to me with professions, true or false, of a desperate attachment. Transports, anxieties, jealousies, reproaches, nothing was wanting, and it was all so well acted that the scene became interesting. His conversation, and especially his letters, the best of the kind I ever saw, amused me immensely. I must admit that it is flattering to be persistently loved by those whom one does not love and does not deceive.

I had other agreeable friends besides. Monsieur

de Fontenelle, who never visited any but the inhabitants of his own neighbourhood, called upon me frequently at that time. The Duc de Brancas, whose lively and brilliant imagination produced such strange sallies, paid me some attention. I had softened the ferocity of Toureil; he was not rude to me. Several others, not present in my memory, took pains to see me. The society and kindness of so many people of talent and divers characters gave variety and charm to my life without any admixture of anxiety, and I should have enjoyed it had I not been harassed by my night-watches and the torments inflicted by my comrades, who, not satisfied with depriving me by their tricks of the little rest that I could snatch by day or night, compelled me to dismiss, one after the other, most of my visitors, as as the only means of escaping their criticisms. It was vain to assure me that to renounce intimacies is to acquiesce in the scandal, and renders them suspicious; I know that people never renounce those they ought to renounce, and that no sign of indifference is so evident as the cessation of intercourse.

Before passing on to subjects of greater importance I will revert to what I have hitherto omitted regarding Monsieur de Silly. He had returned from Germany without informing me or giving any sign of life. Before the King's death I had met one of his servants at Versailles with whom

I was acquainted. I asked him in what country his master then was, for it was long since I had had any tidings of him. He told me that he had come back some months ago. I perceived that he treated me like an old newspaper for which one has no further use. My indignation lowered him in my estimation, and the affairs which followed, joined with the occupations connected with them, in a measure removed him from my thoughts. The esteem also with which the testimony of others had induced me to regard myself made me scorn to care so much for one who did not care for me. Yet the imperishable feelings that I had for him only changed their form; from their ruins sprung up the tender and perfect friendship which I have always retained for him, and which never allowed me to give anyone else the preference above him. He had taken a house in Paris; the Marquise de Silly had left her asylum, and they lived together. Invited or not invited, I do not remember, but I went to see her, and I saw him. He also came to see me at the Tuileries, but only seldom. His relations with the Regent and his political fanaticism made him dread even the semblance of any connection with our house. The Abbé de Chaulieu, whom nothing escaped, finding him with me one day, at once discerned what he was to me; his great discrimination of feelings led him to recognise mine, changed as they were. From this

knowledge he derived a new and strange means of ingratiating himself; namely, by making parties for me, which he rendered delightful by inviting Monsieur de Silly. I remember among others a dinner that he gave to us and Mademoiselle de Vauvray, at the house of the Grand Prior, at Clichy, at which I was extremely amused. My diminished sensibility enabled me to enjoy simple pleasures, such as are supplied by a fine day, a pleasant spot, and good company.

My favour with my Princess was further increased by the troubles which befell her. The Duke of Orleans, when he had feared everything had promised everything; he had arranged with the Duc de Bourbon, who was annoyed by the rank and prerogatives of the legitimised princes, to cancel the Acts by which they had been conferred. But lest, by so doing, he should add to his own difficulties, he would not allow this affair to be referred either to the meeting of Parliament or to the Bed of Justice by which the Regency was to be decreed; he signified to the Duc de Bourbon that for the moment their only thought must be to establish his authority as Regent, which, when fully confirmed, would enable him to redeem all his promises. The Duc de Bourbon consented to this delay; but as soon as he saw the Regency secured to the Duke of Orleans he demanded the fulfilment of his engagements, and

proposed to present a petition requesting the King to be pleased to hold a Bed of Justice in order to revoke the edict, which, failing the legitimate, called the legitimised princes to the succession to the Crown, as well as of the proclamation giving them the title, rank, and honours of Princes of the Blood.

The Regent, as much from political motives as from respect for his wife, still retained some consideration for the Duc du Maine, and gave notice of the Duke's design to the Duchess of Orleans, assuring her that he would not give it his countenance. The Duchess transmitted this communication to her brothers.

The Comte d'Eu having, however, reached the age of fifteen, the period at which, by the prerogative of Princes of the Blood, he was entitled to enter Parliament, the Duke of Orleans was afraid that this fresh exercise of a right, of which the Duc de Bourbon claimed the abolition, would exasperate the Prince whom he was trying to restrain. He begged the Duc du Maine to defer the proceeding, promised that no loss should ensue, and that the Comte d'Eu should be treated no differently from his brother, and he protested that he should remember this obligation. Although the Duc du Maine saw the danger he gave way, as one always does give way to him who holds the power.

The great trial as to the inheritance of the

Prince de Condé, which the Duc de Bourbon had recently lost against the Duchesse du Maine and her sisters, in addition to the anger it had aroused, still left open great disputes respecting the division of the property between him, his aunts, and the Princesses. Connected with these transactions was a certain deed which ought to have been executed by the Duc de Bourbon in conjunction with the Duc du Maine; but the latter having, as was his custom, assumed the quality of a Prince of the Blood, the Duc de Bourbon refused to append his signature except with a protest that he did not recognise these titles. This was the first signal of war between the legitimate and the legitimised Princes.

To stifle it at once, the Duc du Maine deemed it essential to acquiesce in all the Duc de Bourbon's wishes as to their personal affairs, and urged the Duchesse du Maine to accept the unfavourable offers made to her in regard to her portion. Although she was thereby despoiled of more than half her property, she readily consented, in order to facilitate a reconciliation then pending on other matters.

The Duc de Bourbon agreed to withdraw his protest, consented that the legitimitised Princes should assume the quality of Princes of the Blood, except in deeds made in conjunction with him; promised not to attack them without the permission of the Regent, and not to incite others to attack

them. This project was communicated to the Duke of Orleans, who, knowing the consent he had given beforehand to the Duc de Bourbon's persecution of the legitimised Princes, intimated to the Duc du Maine that he must not rely upon the conditions of this treaty, and still less sacrifice important interests to it. Nevertheless the Duc du Maine persisted, being unable to believe that the Duc de Bourbon would take advantage of a promise which he had given and did not intend to keep. The deed regarding the share of the Duchesse du Maine was prepared on the terms proposed by the Duc de Bourbon; it was signed and handed over to the Princess. The Duke's protest was withdrawn, and he engaged himself to all the articles agreed upon. The peace was not of long duration. The quarrel which the Duc de Bourbon was only seeking to renew was soon revived by the production of an old decree in which the Duc du Maine, signing in conjunction with him, had assumed the quality of Prince of the Blood. The Duc de Bourbon insisted on the withdrawal of this decree, and declared that he would tolerate the maintenance of the edict of 1714 and the proclamation of 1715 in favour of the legitimised Princes only so long as they made no use of them. 'If they sleep,' said the Duchess, 'we will sleep; if they wake up we will wake too.' The Princess, perhaps fearing that the deed in her hands might be called in question, had it officially ratified in Parliament.

The Duc de Bourbon seeing that the legitimised Princes did not of their own accord lay aside the privileges they enjoyed, presented his requisition to the King conjointly with the Comte de Charolois and the Prince de Conti, according to his original intention. The legitimised Princes presented one on their own part, petitioning that the question should be deferred until the King's majority, hoping by this delay to confirm themselves in their possession and also to find a more favourable tribunal. The Regent at first appeared to favour this expedient. But the vacillation of his character never allowed him to adhere to his first opinion, which was always the best, and he therefore appointed commissioners to decide this great trial, saying that a dispute productive of so many difficulties could not be indefinitely postponed.

There then appeared a number of printed documents to prove or refute the reasonings of the respective parties. In these the subject was only sketched out, but it was thoroughly discussed in the great memorial of the legitimised Princes which was drawn up, under the superintendence of the Duchesse du Maine, by Cardinal de Polignac, Monsieur de Malesieu, and Monsieur Davisart, Advocate-General of the Parliament of Toulouse, who had recently been introduced to the Duc du Maine as a man of much talent and great capacity for business.

The Duchesse du Maine herself had a great share in this work, not only by her own previous knowledge of the affair, but also by her laborious researches. These occupied the greater part of the night. The huge volumes piled upon her bed, like mountains about to smother her, rendered her, as she said, like Enceladus crushed beneath Mount Etna. I assisted in this labour, and I also turned over the old chronicles and legal authorities of ancient and modern times, until extreme fatigue inclined the Princess to take some rest. Then I read to her, to send her to sleep; and at last I also went to seek a little slumber, which I did not find.

From the desire to enrich this work with everything that could give it greater weight, precedents and authorities favourable to the cause were collected from all quarters. Countless obscure individuals offered to make researches, and brought their slender discoveries. The greater number of these people were referred to me, or at least desired to apply to me. One among others famous for his great learning (it was Boivin the elder, a scholar who was almost more Hebrew than French, more familiar with the customs of the Chaldeans than with those of his own country, and who was acquainted with no other court than that of Semiramis), desired an introduction, that he might produce his ancient treasures, well nigh useless for the affair in question.

Examples drawn from the family of Nimrod would scarcely have been conclusive for the family of Louis XIV. An appointment was given him, however, and he was desired to come to me. When he arrived, I was attending the toilet of the Duchesse du Maine. I was informed that he was there. She said to me, 'Do not go away; send for him, and I will see him.' He came to her, under the impression that he was being taken to the room of one of her women. Neither the gilded furniture, the paraphernalia of her toilet, nor the number of her attendants were capable of undeceiving him. He talked to her, always calling her Mademoiselle, and went away without suspecting that he had spoken to anyone but me.

This traffic of erudition brought me into communication with people of every description. One of the most pertinacious was an Abbé de Camus, introduced by a supposititious Countess, who was really a pauper. They both played a part in our great performance, unworthy as they were, from their vacuity, to appear in it.

Among other scholars a gentleman, formerly a monk, obtained an introduction, his writings in hand, from the said Countess. She persuaded him that to gain a hearing, he must give me a supper at his own house. I could not escape, and I went with the starving Countess, who could not contain herself

with delight at the prospect of a supper. I found a party belonging rather to the other world than to this one. On the countenance of the rich and stingy host was depicted his distress at the necessity of feeding us. My face was no less melancholy, and at last from mere weariness I began to make up the fire, which was burning low. With a strong pair of tongs I seized what, in my shortsightedness, I mistook for a log out of place, which I laid on some half-lighted wood. It was, in fact, a very black chocolate-pot full of chocolate. I had not contemplated this delicacy, which was as much out of place as the supposed brand. The overturned liquid extinguished the fire as well as the pleasure of the guests, and threw our host into the greatest consternation. I assured him as a consolation that one could do very well without chocolate after supper. I believe he never had any again in his life, for fear of the recurrence of such a grievous accident.

I made a still stranger expedition with the Countess and the Abbé. They insisted on my seeing another intriguer who was possessed, as they maintained, of the most important secrets. She was a friend of the Abbé de Verac, who had written for or against the Duc de Bourbon, and from whom, according to them, important information might be obtained. The Duchesse du Maine, like those invalids who, not content with the advice of skilful physicians, lend an

ear to impostors also, accepted all these statements and sent me on a voyage of discovery. From the Dame du Puy, for so she styled herself, I gained nothing but the firm conviction of her uselessness.

Our friends returned to the attack and declared that at table she could speak like the Pythoness on the tripod. All their intrigues tended to obtain a a few suppers at free charges. I was condemned to sup with this band of robbers. I was taken to the scene of the festivity, a tennis-court, in a half-ruined building. I went through dark and tortuous passages, and was made to cross over transparent floorings. This perilous journey inspired me with alarming thoughts. I doubted whether I was being taken to the Witches' Sabbath; whether I should find a cut-throat or still worse. The party, when I joined it, was not reassuring; it seemed to consist of people suited to these various mysteries. The songs which enlivened the repast were all in accordance. The wine drunk by the Dame du Puy did not cause her to reveal any of her profound secrets. She reappeared again at the palace with her ambiguous speeches, of which we never reached the solution. She may have been a spy. But however it was, her manœuvres ended in nothing, and I mention her only because she was quoted in some of the authentic documents relating to our great affair.

The memorial of the legitimised Princes was at

last completed. It was good and well written, but its success did not correspond with the labour bestowed upon it. The trial was held and lost; the edict calling the Princes to the succession was revoked, as well as the declaration giving them the title of Princes of the Blood. Nothing was left to them but the rank and the honours which they had previously enjoyed in virtue of their patents. The prerogative of crossing the floor of Parliament was preserved by right of possession to the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse for their lives. By this decree of 1717 the former declaration was maintained conferring an intermediate rank in Parliament on them and their posterity. The Prince de Dombes was deprived of the rank he had enjoyed, apparently in order to verify the Regent's promise of equalising the position of the two brothers.

It was a terrible distress for the Duchesse du Maine to see the degradation of her family, the fall of the edifice she had all her life laboured to erect, and the triumph of those who had overthrown it! In a state of such violent agitation it seems impossible to force oneself to inaction. Thinking herself hardly treated in France, the Duchesse du Maine thought it possible to obtain support from the King of Spain. The extreme piety of this prince suggested to her the idea of entering into communication with the Jesuit who was his spiritual

director. With this view she begged me to sound Father Tournemine, whom I had formerly seen in Normandy, and who occasionally paid his court to her. I had no right to give advice to her Highness; blind obedience was my only province. So I obeyed and called on the Reverend Father. I suggested to him the ideas in question, as dexterously as I could. He seized upon them eagerly, and said that he had a friend, a man of position and a foreigner, who was obliged to go to Spain on his own private affairs; that full confidence could be placed in him, that he might be charged with negotiations of the greatest delicacy, and was capable of discharging them; that if this channel were acceptable to the Duchesse du Maine he would send him to me, and I was to present him to her; that he would give him letters for Spain, and that her Highness might entrust him with any commissions which she wished to have executed in that country.

I repeated this conversation to the Duchesse du Maine. She approved of the Father's proposition. He sent me his name. This was the Baron Walef. He was introduced to the Princess in the character of a man of talent who wished to show her some poetry of his own composition. He did actually make verses. She had some private interviews with him, gave him her instructions, and expressly desired him not to exceed them. At that time she merely wished

to induce the King of Spain to support the Duc du Maine and his oppressed family. The Baron was to see Cardinal Alberoni, the Prime Minister, and ascertain to what point he was willing to espouse their interests, and urge the King his master to embrace them from motives of consanguinity and respect for the wishes of his grandfather, the late King, which had been unscrupulously infringed.

It was settled in what manner this Baron was to render an account of his negotiation. I suggested that his letters should be addressed to me, so that the Duchesse du Maine might be the less compromised. They were to contain only general news, but he was provided with an invisible ink, that he might write the secret matter between the lines. I had the same for the communications which I was charged to make. For the sake of greater security he arranged that his letters should be transmitted through a woman who lived in Paris and was entirely devoted to his service.

When all these measures were taken and he was already supposed to be gone he came to me again and said that for the expenses of his journey he had reckoned on some money that had failed him, and asked me to sell some jewels which he possessed I told the Duchesse du Maine. She understood that he wanted money and gave him a hundred louis. He set off, and took the road to Italy, where

he pretended to have some preliminary business, and whence he was to embark for Spain. The result of this fine embassy was nearly such as is recounted in the declaration that I made on the subject. I took care to state nothing but the truth, convinced that when one is compelled to deviate from the fact, it is nevertheless best to adhere to it as closely as possible. It is the safest and most upright course. There is a way of distributing light and shade over the incidents described, so that, without disturbing the foundation, the appearance is changed. This is what I endeavoured to do in this document. It will be found in its proper place. There is no use in treating at length, what is there given in sufficient detail.

The Duchesse du Maine was too much excited to rest content with this simple transaction, of which the object was to persuade the King of Spain to defend the Duc du Maine by negotiations, and uphold the enactments made by the late King in his favour.

Several persons among the highest nobility of the kingdom, had maintained that the affair of the legitimised princes ought not to be decided without the intervention of the nobles. A protest was drawn up on this subject and signed by many people of importance. This inclined the Duchesse du Maine to ally herself with some of their party. She knew

that most of them were discontented with the Government, complained of it with acerbity, and contemplated making an agitation. In like manner, as one is attracted by a faint gleam appearing amid thick darkness, she made advances to these people, with a confused perception that she might turn them to some account. Two of the chief among them, the Comte de C—— and the Marquis de Pompadour, were brought to her. They were in communication with the Prince de Cellamare, the Spanish Ambassador, and were of opinion that great things might be accomplished through his intervention. They persuaded her to meet him in a small house that she had at the Arsenal. She went there, with few attendants, and L—— took the Ambassador at night, serving him as coachman. This was repeated a second time, and was not unknown to the Regent, who thenceforth began to take umbrage at these underhand dealings. I shall dispense with an explanation of their plan, for I never understood it, and perhaps they had none. All that I could make out was that the King of Spain was to be deterred from acceding to the Quadruple Alliance, as being too favourable to the Duke of Orleans, and induced to demand the assembly of the States-General, as a means of restraining the authority of the Regent and repressing the abuses of his government. The Duchesse du Maine insisted only on the first point.

She demonstrated to the Prince de Cellamare the dangerous consequences of the accession of the King of Spain. This was the principal topic of her conversations with him. She entrusted to him a memorial extremely well drawn up, and which she had composed herself, exclusively on this subject, and he transmitted it safely to his Court.

Messieurs de L—— and de P—— also drew up several memorials, which were as false in facts as in arguments. They stated as certain, whatever came into their heads, promising the mediation and support of a number of people entirely ignorant of their design, who on vain conjectures they considered fit to share in it. The Duchesse du Maine did not approve of their dreams, and acquiesced in them not from weakness of intellect but from the mental agitation which forced her to action, regardless of any definite purpose.

The Prince de Cellamare having sanctioned the scheme of demanding the assembly of the States-General in the name of his master, required a draft of the letters that the King of Spain was desired to write on this subject, one to the King and another to the Parliament. The Duchesse du Maine requested Monsieur de Malesieu to write these drafts in conjunction with Cardinal de Polignac. The original of this document, in the handwriting of both, was of course to be destroyed. The Cardinal, in haste to

attend the King's Mass, admonished the Duchesse du Maine to burn it at once. When the copy was completed, Monsieur de Malesieu took possession of it for this purpose; but, whether from forgetfulness or with an idea of preserving it in a place of safety, it was nowhere to be found. He was much perturbed by this loss, which he did not divulge, and it was supposed by all concerned, that this important paper was no longer in existence.

Of all this the Duchesse du Maine had told me nothing. She confided many things to me, and concealed others. I did not court these perilous confidences, of which I so well foresaw the consequences, that I sometimes endeavoured to make her aware of them. But when I observed that she was risking imprisonment she only laughed, followed her own devices, and dreaded nothing but the Duc du Maine's refusal to acquiesce in them.

The favour with which she honoured me did not, however, shield me from a storm which nearly alienated me altogether. One evening, when I was not well, I lay down upon my bed awaiting the hour for my night-watch. I was summoned to attend her disrobing. I asked whether she wanted me for anything appertaining to my special office, such as writing, fetching a book, or anything else committed to my charge. I was told that it was for her toilet. The small share I had in the operation led me to

think that I might rest a little longer. Her Serene Highness sent again to fetch me, and gave me a severe reprimand for the dispensation I had allowed myself. She told me that she required women to wait upon her and not to form an academy. This tone, which she had never taken with me before, affronted me. I told her that I had so little talent for service that she could not have been more unlucky in her choice. My answer roused her indignation, and her reply, which I do not remember, caused me to leave the room. She did not send for me at the usual hour in the night, and I spent it in preparations for departure, being fully determined to leave my situation. Overwhelmed with fatigue, worn out with vexations, I felt that I had no support but the consideration I enjoyed with her; when she failed me all the rest was unbearable.

I had recently engaged a servant-girl for myself alone, as the maid who served us in common was a perpetual source of dissension. Mine was extremely sensible. I told her what had occurred, and desired her to make arrangements for my departure. Yet not wishing to take a step without advice and the sanction of my friends, I went at daybreak to Monsieur de Valincourt, whose prudence and kind offices were an indispensable support to me in this crisis. He felt, as I did that I could not allow myself to be ill-used, and approved of my plan of

retiring to a convent. It is true that I had not the means of remaining there long, but I flattered myself that he and my other friends would find me a situation more endurable than the one I was leaving.

To make my resignation in due form, I went the same morning to Madame de Chambonnas, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse du Maine. I told her that it was the kindness of her Highness which had alone supported me in the painful life that I led, and that on finding myself deprived of her favour, I could no longer endure the burden of my troubles, and I begged her to obtain the consent of the Duchesse du Maine to my retirement into a convent. But the lady-in-waiting said that resignations were not made in that fashion; that I must return to the Tuileries (she herself did not live there), that she would speak to her Highness, and would give me her answer. I went back, therefore; and in order to act with propriety I thought it would not be amiss to write to Cardinal de Polignac, who had always testified regard and kindness for me, and to render him an account of my determination and the motives which had induced me to take it. My letter despatched, I calmly awaited the result. Towards evening Madame de Chambonnas sent me word to come to her in her Highness's closet, where she was awaiting me. She had been commissioned to appease me and induce me to stay. She set about it ill. Her talent for

negotiation was small. She understood human nature as little as she did business. Instead of soothing a wounded spirit with evidences of esteem and regard, she only represented to me my own impotence and poverty, as if to justify the insult I had received. 'You probably reckoned,' said she, 'upon a pension, and you will have none.' I replied that I had reckoned upon nothing. 'What will you live upon?' returned she. 'That is my affair, madame,' said I. 'I shall trouble nobody; but whatever happens, I shall no longer expose myself to vexations that I do not deserve and that I cannot bear.' After some remarks equally unpleasing she left me and went to report the bad success of her mission.

The Duchesse du Maine, however, whether from a general dislike to parting with what she had, or that, not knowing me sufficiently, she trembled for the secrets she had confided to me, did not wish me to leave her, and entrusted a more skilful hand than that of Madame Chambonnas with the charge of bringing me back.

Cardinal Polignac no doubt showed her the letter I had written to him and made her feel that if she wished to retain me, it could only be effected by good treatment and by placing me on a better footing in her household. While supper was going on he came to me in my room and desired me to come at once with him to the Duchesse du Maine, who

was alone. He insisted that I should make some apology, but guaranteed, not only that I should be well received, but that she would soon withdraw me from the situation I then held, and give me a more agreeable position. It would not be fitting for her to seem compelled to do so in order to retain me; that she would, therefore, be obliged to defer the favour she intended to bestow upon me, of which he himself would stand surety. On the faith of this treaty, I thought that I might yield. I followed the Cardinal, who took me by the hand and led me to the Princess. I threw myself at her feet; she immediately raised me and embraced me, a favour which she had never before conferred upon me, and which I understood to be one of the conditions stipulated by the skilful negotiator. Little was said on either side, but that little was affectionate, and I resumed my usual habits.

The annoyance of such episodes, combined with the unpleasantness of my position, induced me to listen to some proposals of marriage. A friend of mine told me that she was intimate with a man of business who, by the aid of patronage, could effect a profitable arrangement through my intervention. I consulted Monsieur de Valincourt. He saw the man, and found that, with papers from which he derived nothing, he wanted to buy a place of Receiver-General of Finances, which would be worth twenty

thousand livres a year. He offered either to marry me, or to give me forty thousand francs if his negotiation should prove successful. It was difficult, but Monsieur de Valincourt undertook the business as a means of securing my fortune, which he had much at heart. To obtain his object, he employed the interest of his master, the Comte de Toulouse, with the Duc de Noailles, who was then Chief of the Council of Finances. I saw the man in question, so as to decide on the best use to be made of his proposals. I thought him below par on every point, unless as regards economy. He was a widower, and had one child. I forget how it chanced that he told me he did not keep Lent because his son was too delicate to fast. This gave me an idea of the luxury of his house, which, combined with our incompatibility in other respects, decided me to prefer his money to himself.

I discussed with Monsieur de Valincourt all the delicacies of conscience and honour on this point. He even consulted the Chancellor on the subject, having already enlisted him in the affair, hoping to obtain the support of his authority.

The Duc de Noailles readily acquiesced, to please the Comte de Toulouse, and wrote him a letter granting his request in favour of our man. Nothing was left for the completion of the business save a few formalities, and I considered it already accom-

plished, when the First President asked for a meeting with the Duchesse du Maine in the middle of the night, to inform her of the great secret that the Duc de Noailles was about to be deposed from his place in the Finances and replaced by Monsieur d'Argenson, who was also to receive the seals taken from the Chancellor. She sent for me as soon as she returned and imparted this secret to me, without being aware of the interest I took in it, and which she did not notice. In the present circumstances, however, I could not have learnt anything more disastrous for me than this piece of news. Notwithstanding all the motives for telling Monsieur de Valincourt I kept the secret faithfully. It soon transpired, however, by the quite unexpected part taken by the public, and my affair was hopelessly ruined. It would have been much worse had it led me to behave in a manner unworthy of myself. Monsieur de Valincourt was more vexed than I was, to see that my unlucky star had overthrown two Ministers at once; yet, at the risk of upsetting a third, he made attempts with the new Keeper of the Seals, who was likewise his friend, to procure for the man we had in hand, some considerable post, which might still be rendered profitable. Hopes were held out, which were totally annihilated by the events in which I found myself gradually implicated. This is what he wrote to me on the subject some time previously :—

Letter.

'I send you the rest of Seneca's Epistles and the Treatise on Favours, translated by Malherbe. I hope you will keep them and add them to your library. If I had not still some hopes of the Keeper of the Seals and of Monsieur Paris, to whom I wrote this morning, this gift would somewhat resemble that which Masinissa made to Sophonisba, saying that as he was unfortunate enough to be unable to emancipate her from servitude, he sent her the only means to release herself.'

Before there was any question of this affair the Duchesse du Maine, more tranquil than she had been for a long time, made a journey to Seaux, whither I was unable to accompany her. Troubles and vexations had undermined my health, and it had now become entirely deranged. I remained at Paris in a house near the Tuileries, hired for Mademoiselle du Maine, as accommodation was not provided for her in the palace. In this, a room had been allotted to me, to which I sometimes went to rest in the afternoon, out of reach of my noisy comrades.

As soon as I was able to drag myself about I joined the Duchesse du Maine, at Seaux, towards the end of her stay, which lasted only a month or six weeks. This temporary absence showed me

that the strongest tie one can have with princes is that of habit; moreover it is easily broken and easily renewed. At first I was like a stranger, but finally I returned to favour, and resumed the thread of the small intrigues which I had lost by my absence.

We returned to the Tuileries, and it was at that time that the Duchesse du Maine, being requested by the Marquis de Pompadour to see the Abbé Brigaut, and hear him read a work entitled *Réponse aux titres de Filsmoris*, consented to do so. The Abbé represented himself as the author. It was the description of a Grey Friar's journey in Spain, and was intended, as was supposed, to incite a great revolution in favour of the Duke of Orleans, who very unjustly suspected Cardinal de Polignac of having written this libel. The Abbé Brigaut was the confidential adviser of Monsieur de Pompadour. He mentioned him to the Duchesse du Maine as a man fit for important affairs, and of inviolable fidelity. On this testimony she did not scruple to disclose her wishes and to speak of plans in contemplation. This man was anxious to mingle in intrigues, either from the hope of raising himself from a state of poverty or from taste or idleness. He had already taken part in the Pretender's affairs. This new object seemed more interesting, and he espoused it, although neither his courage nor his skill were equal to the undertaking.

The Regent was, at this time, vehemently desirous of securing the treaty of the Quadruple Alliance arranged in England by the Abbé Dubois.

At its first suggestion in the Council of Regency, the Duc du Maine upheld all the objections to the measure. The Duke of Orleans, in a state of exasperation, said as he left the Council, 'Monsieur du Maine has unmasked himself at last.' His opinion did not prevail; yet he remained burdened with the hatred of the Regent, who moreover, aware of the relations maintained by the Duchesse du Maine with so many people whom he suspected, began to feel great distrust of her. The fear of difficulties likely to be raised against him, combined with his aversion to the Duc du Maine, whom he thought or pretended to think a participator in the agitation, led him to contemplate the withdrawal of the King from his care. The undertaking was hazardous. On this point, the will of the late King was ratified by a decree of the same Parliament which had entrusted the Regency to the Duke of Orleans, and by the Bed of Justice which had confirmed it. It seemed dangerous to invalidate these Acts. The suspicions of which he had been the object, seemed to necessitate still greater precaution in tampering with the guardianship and care of the King's person. Nevertheless, encouraged by d'Argenson, the Keeper of the Seals, and by the Abbé Dubois, the one firm,

and the other violent, he overcame all these difficulties.

To gain authorisation for his scheme, he propounded it to the Council of Regency. No one opposed it but Marshal de Villeroi. He had taken up the profession of an honest man, and he played the part pretty well. To show that he had not consented to the degradation of the Duc du Maine, he immediately afterwards sought a pretext for writing to him, and crowded his letter with all the titles of which the Prince had been despoiled.

The Duc and the Duchesse du Maine received warning that a great tempest was impending over them. The alarm was great, and precaution was exercised. At last, as nothing occurred, confidence was restored, and so much so, that on the occasion of the Festival of Saint Louis, her fête-day, the Duchesse du Maine went to sup and sleep at the Arsenal, the usual scene of her parties of pleasure. There she learnt in the early morning, that preparations were being made for a Bed of Justice which the King was to hold at the Tuileries that same day. She returned in great haste. I had not accompanied her to the Arsenal, and I was informed simultaneously of her return and of this strange news. I could not see her immediately, for she was engaged in discussing the actual state of affairs with the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse.

The Parliament, according to the orders received, adjourned to the Tuileries, which was surrounded with troops. The greater number of the magistrates exhibited a sad countenance, but no one gave any sign of energy. Everything took place according to the wishes of the Regent. The part taken by the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse of retiring from the Assembly as soon as they saw that they were the subject of discussion, rendered it perfectly easy to carry out resolutions aimed solely at the Duc du Maine. On the most frivolous pretexts, he was deprived of the guardianship of the King, as well as of the superintendence of his education, which was given to the Duc de Bourbon on his demanding it by petition. On another petition from the two Dukes, all Acts in favour of the legitimised Princes and their children, were cancelled. The Comte de Toulouse alone, was reinstated on the spot, in the enjoyment of his rank and honours on the terms of the decree of 1717, by reason of the services he had rendered to the State and the satisfaction given by his conduct.

All this was accomplished without the slightest resistance on either side. The Parliament, however, drew up a protest against the proceedings of the Bed of Justice, but this never came to light. It is strange that the Duc du Maine should have made no attempt to maintain himself in a position which

he held by such good right. The Duc de Bourbon took possession without delay, and the apartments occupied by the Duc and Duchesse du Maine were surrendered to him the same day. They took refuge at the Hotel de Toulouse. The shock of this flight and hasty evacuation, and still more of the event which occasioned it, made an impression upon me such as I never felt in any other circumstances. The Duchesse du Maine sent me to Seaux to examine her papers and burn any that might be reprehensible. I acquitted myself so well that when they were seized some time afterwards, nothing was found to which objection could be made. I returned in the evening to the Hotel de Toulouse, and passed the whole night with the Duchesse du Maine. Her condition cannot be described. It was a dejection resembling the entire extinction of life, or a lethargic slumber interrupted only by convulsive starts.

The next day we all set off to Seaux, where we remained thunder-stricken. It is wonderful how we identify ourselves with all that concerns those to whom our life is devoted. I was three days and three nights without taking the slightest rest. My own misfortunes never affected me so profoundly. In addition to the present evils there remained countless subjects of anxiety. Calamity leads to the acquaintance of fear. The letters from Spain which

I received occasionally from our Baron might be intercepted, and our secret dealings discovered. Everyone was anxious, but the most perturbed of all was Monsieur de Malesieu. The draft of the King of Spain's letters, which he had lost, threw him into a state of agitation that he could not conceal. He fancied that some one had seized upon it to show it to the Regent. Yet he continued his search. He asked me one day if I knew anything of a paper that had been stolen from him, in his handwriting and that of Cardinal de Polignac, and full of erasures. He did not explain what were the contents of this document; and as it had been kept a secret from me I did not know what he meant, and I merely assured him that I had never seen or heard of any such paper as he described.

After having remained for some time in a state which suspended all thought and prohibited all action, the Duchesse du Maine began to revive, and at last became herself again. Not venturing any longer to see suspected people herself, yet curious to know what they were about, she sent me secretly to Paris to speak to the Comte de L——. I spent three hours alone with him. He detailed all manner of chimeras, and displayed as their principal foundation, the Northern League, which was then under discussion, and the restoration of the Pretender, which would ruin the mainstay of the Duke

of Orleans. No ideas were ever more vast, or less coherent. Our long conversation ended by reciprocal promises of never, on any account, mentioning one another's names in the event of imprisonment or cross-examination. This point of view was familiar to us, and, to say the least, formed the background of the picture.

In returning to Seaux all alone, on a very dark night, I was upset half-way, and spent a couple of hours partly in a ditch and the rest at a mill. In the times when omens were held in honour, this one would not have been disregarded.

I gave her Highness the best account I could of the rubbish that had been retailed to me. It was an effort of memory, for neither sense nor sequence aided in the recital. She did not fail to discern some hopes, and seized upon them as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

After having spent about two months in painful inaction, the Duchesse du Maine wished to return to Paris. She had no residence there. The necessity for seeking one, was the reason or the pretext for the stay she made at the house occupied by her daughter. The desire to be more within reach of knowing what was happening was no doubt the real motive.

The people allied to her by interest, continued to press their point, without perceiving that it was

too much weakened to have any effect. They drew up documents without end, and only awaited an opportunity of transmitting them to Spain. Monsieur de Pompadour, having indited one which he considered unanswerable, wished to communicate it to the Duchesse du Maine. The promise which the Duc du Maine had exacted from her that she would not see any of the persons suspected of caballing, obliged her to refuse the interview demanded by the Marquis. He insisted on the necessity of this meeting, and the impossibility of finding a channel sufficiently trustworthy for the transmission of the document in question. She finally consented that he should read it to her himself, after having taken all sorts of precautions against the discovery of the interview. Far from approving of this memorial, she considered it pernicious, and implored Monsieur de Pompadour not to send it. He pretended to give way to her arguments and wishes. She sometimes sent me to carry letters to him, which, however, I took care to make him burn in my presence.

Madame de Pompadour always said, in a tone of lamentation, 'We possess the most decisive and useful treatises, but nothing is ever sent.' Her husband and she thought they had found the most favourable opportunity possible for transmitting the whole of these papers to Spain. This was by the Abbé Portocarrero, a young man twenty-two years of age. He

had a carriage with a false bottom in which the papers were placed and appeared to our good people in perfect safety. The Comte de L—— wrote to apprise the Duchesse du Maine of the arrangement. She was strongly opposed to this dangerous mode of transmission, and at once saw what would be the result.

Vain attempts were made to reassure her as to the great prudence and discretion of the man to whom so much had been entrusted. It is true the discovery of the papers he carried was due to no fault of his. All the world knew that the Secretary of the Spanish Ambassador, when apologising for not keeping an assignation with a girl belonging to the Community of la Fillon, told her that he could not meet her as agreed, because, owing to the departure of the Abbé Portocarrero, he had so many despatches to write. The girl told her Superior. who, being much connected with the Regent, forwarded the information to him, thinking that it might be of consequence.

He immediately sent orders to stop the Abbé on the road and seize his papers. He was caught at Poitiers, and when all that was wanted had been taken from him, he was allowed to proceed on his way. He at once sent a messenger to the Prince de Cellamare to inform him of what had occurred; and this messenger was so expeditious that he reached

Paris some time before the courier who conveyed the same news to the Regent, and who only arrived late in the evening. The Regent had been spending part of the night at table in agreeable society, and had no fancy for employing the rest of it in the investigation of an unpleasant affair. It is said that one of the party, little interested in the affairs of the State, advised him to defer opening the parcel. However it may have been, the Ambassador had sixteen hours in which to take his measures before his arrest, which renders him inexcusable for neglecting to remove or destroy the papers compromising the people connected with him.

He sent word to the Comte de L—— and despatched a hundred louis to the Abbé Brigaut, desiring him to leave Paris secretly and without delay. The Abbé was acquainted with the Chevalier de Menil; he went to him saying that he was about to make a journey which might be long, begged him to take charge of a casket which he placed in his hands, adding that it contained his will and some family papers. The Chevalier knew that the Abbé Brigaut had taken an active interest in the concerns of the Chevalier de St. Georges; he supposed that the same affairs were in question, and made no inquiries. After this short conversation the Abbé left him and set off, but the next day his servant maid brought to the Chevalier de Menil a

large packet of sealed letters, which she said her master, when starting, had desired her to convey to him. He took it, as he had taken the casket, without suspecting any deception.

In the afternoon of the same day (December 9, 1718) the Chevalier de Gavaudun, one of the chief gentlemen of our household, came into my room. Monsieur de Valincourt was with him. He said, 'Here is a great piece of news. The Spanish Ambassador's house is invested, and the whole neighbourhood is full of troops. Its reason is not yet known.' I was panic-stricken. But I tried to show nothing more than the surprise natural at this event, for Monsieur de Valincourt was not aware of the share we had in it.

Gavaudun was behind the scenes, and left us, as he only wanted to inform me of what had happened. Monsieur de Valincourt stayed a long time discussing the occurrence, at which he was greatly astonished. I do not know how my agitation can have escaped his notice, for I had much trouble in concealing it. I afterwards had to undergo a visit from the Abbé de Chaulieu, who kept me under the same constraint. The Ambassador's arrest and random conjectures on the subject were again the sole topic of conversation.

The Duchesse du Maine, for her part, had no less difficulty in keeping her composure before the

people who were with her. Everybody who came in, announced the news, added fresh circumstances, and talked of nothing else. She did not venture to escape from this importunate society, for fear of raising suspicion. She sent for me, however, for a moment in her wardrobe, and inquired whether I had heard anything particular. I told her that I knew no more than the public report, which alarmed me extremely. She was also very uneasy, although she did not yet see where the danger threatened. She sent me to make some inquiries, from which I gained no enlightenment.

At last we heard that the papers carried by the Abbé Portocarrero had been taken, and that those of the Ambassador had also been seized. It was then that we saw ourselves plunged into the abyss whence there was no means of escape. The next day it was known that the Marquis de Pompadour and the Marquis de Saint Genies were at the Bastille. Two days later, when the Duchesse du Maine was playing at Biribi as usual (she took care to change nothing in her usual course of life), a Monsieur de Châtillon, who was keeping the bank, a dry man, who rarely spoke, said, 'There is a funny piece of news. On account of this affair of the Spanish Ambassador they have arrested and put into the Bastille a certain Abbé de Bri—Bri——.' He could not remember his name. Those who

knew it were not inclined to help him. At last he recollected, and continued: 'What makes it so amusing is, that he has told everything, and a number of people are in difficulty.' And then he burst out laughing, for the first time in his life.

The Duchesse du Maine, who felt not the slightest inclination to laugh, said, 'Yes, that is very funny.' 'Oh, it makes one die of laughing,' rejoined he. 'Just imagine these people who fancied their affair quite secret! And then comes a man who tells more than he is asked, and mentions everyone by their name.' This last stroke threw our Princess into the most cruel anxiety, and was entirely unexpected, for the Comte de L—— had sent her word that the Abbé had escaped, and that measures had been so well taken in this respect that there was no cause for alarm. She endured the painful conversation of Monsieur de Châtillon to the end, without giving any sign of the various feelings by which she was agitated. When I was with her at night, she gave me an account of it, and expressed apprehensions which I was unable to dissipate, being only too well convinced of the sad fate hanging over her. Some one was arrested every day, and we were only awaiting our turn.

The Chevalier de Menil was sent to the Bastille also. The Abbé Brigaut, as I have said, had entrusted him with his casket and his papers.

The Chevalier had at the time suspected nothing; but when he heard that the Prince de Cellamare had been arrested for affairs of the State, knowing as he did, that the Abbé was in communication with him, he inferred from his hasty departure that he might be engaged in the same affair, and was much perplexed what to do with the property in his charge. He was well aware of the severity of the law on this head, but he preferred to expose himself to it, rather than to fail a person who, without being his intimate friend, had put his trust in him. He thought it right, however, to ascertain the nature of the deposit under his care. He dexterously opened the casket, and found in it, as the Abbé had said, only his will, and some other papers equally unimportant. He closed it again as if it had never been opened, and next unsealed the roll of papers which contained the drafts, memorials, and all that had been written concerning this Spanish affair, of which he had known nothing until that moment. He had not time to read so many different documents, but in looking through them he saw enough to assure himself that they contained nothing against the King or the State; and seeing the names of a number of people of distinction who would be implicated in this affair, if this evidence against them were not suppressed, he took the precaution of throwing the whole into the fire.

Several other intrigues were involved, distinct from ours, which, although without reciprocal connection, all pointed to Spain, and treated severally with the Ambassador. Comtes Daydie and Magni, who on the first rumour fled to Spain, had their private cabal. The Duc de Richelieu, sent to the Bastille much later, had his. Other grandees of the kingdom were likewise suspected of plotting. Indications or proofs of all these things were to be found in the Abbé Brigaut's memorial. The Prince de Cellamare had initiated him into all or nearly all the intrigues.

The day after the Chevalier de Menil's bonfire, the Abbé Dubois, to whom he was well known, and who was aware of his connection with the Abbé Brigaut, sent for him and inquired what he had heard about the affair. The Chevalier de Menil assured him that it had never been mentioned to him, but confessed that the Abbé had entrusted him with a closed casket containing, from what he said, only papers relating to his own affairs. The casket was sent for immediately, and it was all found according to statement.

The Abbé Brigaut, however, whom the Ambassador had urged to set off, was slowly journeying along on a hired hack, and in plain clothes. After three days he reached Montargis, where the emissaries of the Duke of Orleans, who had been sent

in all directions to arrest him, took him prisoner, thinking him very like the descriptions given. He at first denied being the person sought for, but some letters found upon his person, addressed to the Abbé Brigaut, which he had not taken the precaution of destroying, were evidence that it was futile to oppose. He was taken back to the Bastille, more quickly than he had come to Montargis.

Fear seized him on entering the prison walls, and he showed himself ready to supply all the information required of him.

Messieurs d'Argenson and le Blanc, who were appointed to the investigation of this affair, soon came to question him, and, as an opening to the conversation, they informed him that his servant-maid was in the Bastille, and that the Chevalier de Menil had handed over the papers he had given him. 'Well, then,' said he, 'if you have those papers you know everything, for they contain it all.' This avowal, so little consistent with the contents of the casket, proved that the Chevalier had made only a partial confession.

Monsieur le Blanc sent for him and repeated the Abbé Brigaut's declaration. Monsieur de Menil boldly protested that he had no other papers of the Abbé's, and said that, to convince themselves, they need only send at once and search his house. After persisting in his denial for some time, and finding

himself alone with Monsieur le Blanc (his escort had withdrawn), he said, 'I am about to speak to you, sir, not as a Minister of State nor as my judge, but as a gentleman who has a regard for sentiments of honour.' This little peroration over, he frankly related to him, without disguise, the course he had taken and the motives which had determined him. Monsieur le Blanc, touched by his confidence, informed him that without betraying his office it would be impossible to keep the secret confided to him, but that he would make known the candour of his deposition, and endeavour to excuse his conduct to the Regent.

Monsieur le Blanc kept him at his own house, and went instantly to the Palais Royal; he really did all he could to palliate the Chevalier de Menil's act, and would have succeeded in appeasing the Duke of Orleans, if the Abbé Dubois, personally affronted at having been deceived, had not used every means to get him sent to the Bastille. He was taken there the same day, notwithstanding the good offices of Monsieur le Blanc and the entreaties of his friend De Nocé, one of the Regent's favourites who offered to keep him at his own house.

A Marquis de Menil, of another family, went to the Duke of Orleans to assure him that he was neither a friend nor a relation of the Chevalier's. 'So much the worse for you, sir,' said the Regent. 'The Chevalier de Menil is a very worthy man.'

I had never heard of the Chevalier de Menil when I was told of his adventure and imprisonment. Great praise was bestowed on his generous behaviour; and I heard so much good of him on this occasion that I was greatly prejudiced in his favour.

As a justification of his violent procedure the Regent had printed and circulated two letters from the Prince de Cellamare to Cardinal Alberoni, which had been seized in the parcel conveyed by the Abbé Portocarrero with other papers sent by the Ambassador to his Excellency. This printed document was headed as follows :—

'To apprise the public of the grounds on which His Majesty, on the 9th of the present month, resolved on dismissing the Prince de Cellamare, Ambassador to the King of Spain, and ordered that a gentleman of his household should accompany him to the frontier, copies have been printed of two letters of the 1st and 2nd instant, from the Ambassador to Cardinal Alberoni, signed by the Ambassador, written throughout in his hand, and without cypher.'

At the end of these two letters this statement was appended :—

'When the King's service and the precautions necessary for the security and tranquillity of the realm shall permit of the publication of the drafts, manifestoes, and memorials cited in these two letters,

publicity will be given to the circumstances of the abominable conspiracy planned by the said Ambassador for the purpose of making a revolution in the kingdom.'

Notwithstanding this promise, nothing further was published; but the care taken to envenom the affair and to render it odious, and the rigour already exercised on the greater number of those supposed to be implicated, foretold the treatment prepared for the persons principally concerned. Sundry hints were already given. The Duchesse du Maine was positively warned through more than one channel that her arrest was in contemplation. She often talked to me about it at night, and told me that wherever she was taken she should ask that I might accompany her. I wished it passionately. We then supposed that, from respect to her rank, she would be placed in some royal residence, with a suitable suite. It was impossible to foresee the severity of the treatment that she experienced. The notion of imprisonment was not very alarming to her, and she even joked with me about it, making plans for rendering her retreat, if not agreeable, at least easy to endure.

I was in this state of melancholy expectation when one evening, more tired than usual, I threw myself on a sofa in my room and fell asleep. In the midst of my slumbers I felt myself pulled by the

arm. I half-opened my eyes, and in the dark I perceived an ill-dressed woman, whom I did not recognise. She said that her mistress had sent her to inform me that the Duchesse du Maine was to be arrested that night, and that she knew it on authority so certain, that it was beyond doubt. This speech waked me completely, and I questioned her as to details, of which she knew nothing. I extracted nothing further than that she was sent by the Marquise de Lambert, to whom I was much attached, and who was strongly in the interest of the Duchesse du Maine, although not in her confidence with regard to this affair.

I went at once to the Princess and told her of the tidings I had received. It merely corroborated the information received from other quarters. She communicated it to the people most intimate with her, and most deeply initiated in her secrets, and kept them with her all night in her room awaiting the moment of the catastrophe, which disturbed her so little that she made many jokes on the subject, in which everybody shared, and this night of alarms was cheerfully spent. I took up a book which I found near at hand, as a suggestion that it was time to sleep. It was Machiavelli's 'Decade,' and was marked at the chapter on conspiracies. I showed it to her, and she burst out laughing, saying, 'Take away that witness against us; it will be one of the strongest.'

The expectation proved vain for the moment. Day came, and advanced, and nothing occurred. Some necessary measures obliged the Regent to postpone the execution of his design for several days. Nevertheless, the Duchesse du Maine, being convinced that he persisted in his intentions, thought of drawing up a memorandum to be sent to the Princess, her mother, to beg her, as soon as her arrest should take place, to demand a trial, well knowing that there was nothing criminal in her conduct, and that a judicial inquiry would oblige the Regent to restore her to liberty. Four or five days had passed pretty quietly, when, after spending part of the night in writing this paper and discussing it with me, she fell asleep towards six o'clock, and I withdrew. I was beginning to doze when I heard my door open. I thought that the Duchesse du Maine had sent for me again. An unknown voice said, 'On His Majesty's service.' It did not occur to me at first what this could mean. I was rudely desired to rise, and I obeyed without reply. It was the 29th of December, and day had not yet dawned. The people who had entered my room had come without a light. They went to get one, and I beheld an officer of the Guard and two musketeers. The officer read me his orders to keep me in sight. I continued to dress, and asked for my maid, whose room was a little further on, but

she was not allowed to come. The whole house was full of guards and musketeers, and it was impossible to move. She vainly tried to pass, and was steadily repulsed.

I was in horrible anxiety as to what was happening in the Duchesse du Maine's apartments, for I took it for granted that she was being arrested at the same time. I felt sure that no one could tell me anything. I heard afterwards that the Duc de Bethune, the Captain of the Local Guard, accompanied by Monsieur de la Billiarderie, Lieutenant of the Body-guard, had brought the order of the King to take her to prison, and that she had submitted without resistance and with great composure. La Billiarderie asked the woman who was sleeping in her room if she was not Mademoiselle de Launay. She replied emphatically in the negative, not at that moment envying the fate intended for me.

I remained alone with my three guards from seven o'clock till eleven, without knowing anything that was happening. I asked one of them, with whom I kept up a slight conversation, whether I should not accompany the Duchess, if she was taken to any place of confinement. He assured me that no request of hers would be refused. This hope quieted me, but I did not enjoy it long, for another guard came to tell mine that the Princess was gone,

and that they might leave me with a single musketeer, which was accordingly done.

The tidings of this departure, in which I was not included, was a terrible blow. It was the first emotion I had felt. I was so fully prepared for the rest that it produced no agitation. I was unable to ascertain whither the Duchesse du Maine was being taken. I was only told that she would sleep that night at Essome, whence I erroneously inferred that she would be kept at Fontainebleau. I should have been much more distressed had I then known that she was being taken to Burgundy, the district under the command of the Duc de Bourbon, to be placed in the citadel of Dijon; that she was travelling in hired carriages, and that her whole suite consisted of two dressers. By the entreaty of her mother, the Princess de Condé, Mademoiselle Desforges, a relative of Monsieur de Malesieu, who had long been attached to her service without any special title, was afterwards sent to her. This was a strange fall for a Princess who had always been surrounded by the world, and who thinks herself alone if she is not in a crowd.

The Captain of the Guards left her at Essome, and Monsieur de la Billiarderie, with detachments of the Body-guard and musketeers, conducted her to Dijon, where he remained with her for some time. He was extremely touched by the misfor-

tunes of the Princess, and only thought how to soften the horrors of her captivity by care and kindness.

The Duc du Maine was arrested at Seaux, where he had remained during the Duchess's sojourn at Paris. He was taken to the citadel of Dourlans in Picardy, where he was guarded by an officer called Favincour, who treated him with the incivility and harshness of a real gaoler. Monsieur de Malesieu, who had stayed at Seaux with the Duc du Maine, was arrested also; his papers were seized in his presence, and in his desk, in the folds of his son's marriage contract, was found the original draft of the letter from the King of Spain to the King of France, about which he had made so many inquiries, and the loss of which he had so much deplored. The moment he saw it, he threw himself upon it, and tore it up; but Monsieur Trudaine, who was searching his papers, rescued the pieces, which were carefully preserved, and Monsieur de Malesieu was taken to the Bastille.

Messieurs Davisard and Barjeton, who had worked at the memorials on the rank of the legitimised Princes, and had no part in the present affair, were included in the disgrace common to everyone specially attached to the house of Maine. Monsieur de Malesieu's son, a Lieutenant-General

of the Artillery, and the Chevalier de Gavaudun were captured at Paris at the house of the Duchesse du Maine, at the same time as herself. Her Maid of Honour, Mademoiselle de Montauban, although she had no great share in her confidence, experienced the same fate. Two grooms of the chamber, four of her footmen, and two housemaids, were all taken in one draught of the net, and sent to the Bastille the same day. The Abbé de Camus and the ruined Countess received the honour of being sent there the same day too, but I believe this took place a little later. The old Marquis de Boisdavis, a gentleman of Poitou, was also taken from his remote country house, on account of a letter he had written to the Duc du Maine, full of offers of service and protestations of devotion to his interests, which was found among his Highness's papers.

Cardinal de Polignac was relegated to Anchin, one of his abbeys in Flanders; the Prince de Dombes, and his brother the Comte d'Eu, were sent to the town of Eu, in Normandy, an estate belonging to the Duc du Maine. His daughter was put into the Convent of the Visitation at Chaillot. The whole family was thus dispersed.

Shut up in my room with a musketeer who knew little of what was occurring, I was unable to hear any of these things. I believe he would willingly have told what he knew, for he offered to do

me any service that I could ask him. I declined to receive any favour, as much from want of confidence, as to avoid giving him any claim on my gratitude in such a critical conjuncture. I had, however, a casket full of papers not relating to affairs of State, but which concerned me personally, and of which I should have been glad to rid myself. On second thoughts, however, I decided that it would be better for it to fall into the hands of the ministers than into those of a musketeer. Happily my first guard was relieved by another, just when he was beginning to take an unpleasant degree of interest in my affairs. His substitute did not seem so amiably disposed. He merely exhorted me to take a slight meal, almost giving me to understand that it might be my last. Not having a notion of what was to be done with me, I did not know what manner of speedy execution he was predicting.

In the afternoon, Messieurs Fagon and Parisot, privy councillors, came to take my papers. I told them that they would find some love-letters, and that it was as well to observe that they were from a man of eighty, although written in the hand of a schoolboy. This was the Abbé Chaulieu, and his secretary was his little page, who had no idea of spelling.

These gentlemen examined my books, in which they found nothing reprehensible, rummaged every-

where, even underneath my mattresses, yet never caught sight of the casket that I wished to conceal. They wanted to search a trunk, of which my maid had the key; this obliged them to send for her, and she was afterwards left with me, which I felt a great comfort. An hour or two later, an officer of musketeers came to bid me prepare to go, without telling me whither I was to be taken. I asked if the girl who waited on me could accompany me. He said that he had no orders as to that, and that he could not allow it without knowing the Regent's wishes. I urgently entreated him to secure me this favour, which would be the only one I should ask. He assured me that it would be granted, and that the girl should follow me closely. He took away his musketeer, and shut me up in my room, alone with my maid, saying that I was to be fetched in half an hour.

This poor girl, whose name was Rondel, though she had been only a year with me, and had been strongly advised not to accompany me, protested that, happen what might, she would not abandon me. I had reason to be as much pleased with her good sense as with her affection.

The casket full of papers which I had preserved disquieted me much, although its contents were only trash, and I was thoughtless enough to desire her to burn them as soon as she found herself alone,

after my departure. I gave her the key; and she had no time to remonstrate, for I was fetched immediately and put into a coach with three musketeers.

It was seven o'clock in the evening. I no longer doubted that the journey would be short, and that I was being taken to the Bastille. I arrived there indeed, and was made to get out at the end of a little bridge, where the Governor came to receive me. After I had arrived, I was kept for some time behind a door, as some of our people were entering whom they did not wish me to see. I understood none of these ceremonies. The others having been put into their cells, the Governor returned to fetch me, and conducted me to mine. I was still passing the bridges when I heard the noise of chains, a disagreeable music. At last I reached a large chamber, in which nothing was to be seen but four very dirty walls, all smeared with charcoal by my weary predecessors. It was so utterly devoid of furniture, that a little straw chair was fetched for me to sit upon, and two stones were brought to support a faggot which was lighted, while a small bit of candle was neatly fastened to the wall to enable me to see. Having supplied me with all these luxuries, the Governor withdrew, and I heard five or six locks close upon me, and twice as many bolts.

Here I was then alone with my faggot, uncertain whether I should have the girl, who was to be society and such great assistance to me, and still perturbed as to how she had carried out the inconsiderate order I had given her, and of which I now saw all the consequences. I spent about an hour in this anxiety, and it was the most painful of the many that I passed in prison.

At last the Governor reappeared, bringing Mademoiselle Rondel. She asked him very civilly whether we were to sleep on the floor. He replied in a flippant tone, quite out of place, and left us. The moment we were alone, I asked what had become of my papers. She told me that she had opened the casket, and that having found it full of papers, without my having specified any one in particular that it was most important to destroy, she had decided that she had not time to burn them all, and still less the means of preventing the ashes from bearing witness against her and me; she had moreover thought that after the search made in my room they would not return to it; and she had therefore reclosed the casket, and replaced it in the dark corner that had concealed it before. She returned me the key. I praised her discretion, which had atoned for a folly on my part which might have been followed by bad consequences.

We were conversing peacefully, when we heard

our door noisily opened; indeed they could not be opened otherwise. We were taken into a room opposite to ours without any reason being given. Explanations are not made in that place, and every-one who speaks to you, has a countenance so reserved that no one ventures to ask questions.

We were barricaded into this room as closely as we had been into the other. Scarcely were we shut up, before I was struck by a noise, which seemed to me most strange and unaccountable. I listened for a considerable time to discover what it could be. Not being able to make it out, and perceiving that it continued without interruption, I asked Rondel what she thought of it. She did not know what to say, but seeing that I was uneasy, she told me it proceeded from the arsenal, which was not far off, and that it might be some machine for preparing saltpetre. I assured her that she was mistaken; that the noise was nearer than she imagined, and very extraordinary. Nothing could be more commonplace, however. I discovered in course of time that this machine, which I had supposed to be intended to crush us to powder, was nothing but the grating of the spit, which we heard the more distinctly as the room to which we had been transferred, was over the kitchen.

Night was advancing, and we had neither bed nor supper. We were at last removed from this

room, in which I was extremely ill at ease, not being freed from my delusion about the noise, which still continued. We returned to our original quarters, and found there a small bed, tolerably clean, an arm-chair, two other chairs, a table, a jug, a water-bottle, and a sort of pallet for Rondel to sleep upon. She did not like it, and complained, but she was informed that these were the King's beds, and that we must be satisfied. Our gaolers then left us, and locked us up again.

Common necessaries, when one dreads not having them, give more pleasure than the most sumptuous splendour can bestow on those who lack nothing. I was, therefore, much pleased to find that I had a bed. I should not have been sorry to have a supper too. It was eleven o'clock at night, and nothing appeared. I then remembered my musketeer's exhortation to eat my dinner, and I supposed that knowing the customs of the place, he was aware that one did not sup in prison. Hunger, which drives the wolf from the wood, lay heavy upon me, and I saw no way of escape. Supper arrived at last, but it was late. The confusion of the day had caused this disorder, and on the morrow, I was as much surprised to see it arrive at six in the evening as I had been the first day at waiting so long. I supped and went to bed; exhaustion would have made me sleep, if the little

bell which the sentry rings every quarter of an hour, to show that he is awake, had not interrupted my slumbers every time. I thought it a cruel regulation to rouse the prisoners every moment, to assure them that watch is kept, not over their safety, but over their captivity, and it was to this that I had the greatest difficulty in accustoming myself.

Monsieur de Launay, the governor of our castle, had only just been installed in his place when we arrived. His predecessor, Monsieur de Bernaville, had died the day before. The present governor was his kinsman and pupil, and had been trained by his predecessor in all the customs of the gaol. He came to see me the day after my entrance. Having seen that he affected a jocular tone, I adopted it with him, and he looked upon me as quite domesticated. I asked him for some books and some playing cards. He sent me some odd volumes of Cleopatra. I made shift with them, while hoping for better things, and I played at piquet with Rondel. She recounted to me all that she had seen and heard on the day of our arrest, before she was shut up with me. When she had told me everything, I made her begin again, and asked her about no end of subjects, of which she could know nothing. I was chiefly curious to know who were the companions of our fate. She named all those she had seen arrested at the same time as myself at our

little Hotel du Maine. There were many others left for us to know. 'We shall have good opportunity,' she said, 'for discovering them on Sunday at the chapel, and I promise you that I will take notice of everything.' We did not then know that no trouble is taken to allow prisoners to practise the duties of religion. It was a distinction conferred on me, that I was taken to hear mass on festivals and Sundays, and I made no progress in the discoveries that I wished to make, for I was hidden beneath a flag, where I could neither see nor be seen.

So many precautions were taken to prevent any prisoner from seeing his comrades that the governor told me it was indispensable to put paper over the windows of my room looking on the inner court of the castle. I represented that it was taking needless trouble for a blind person like me. He had in fact noticed that I could scarcely see, and yielded the point without remembering that I should make use of my companion's eyes. This is what I did. She spent the greater part of the day in looking through the window, placed so that she was not visible and yet nothing could escape her.

Messieurs d'Argenson and Le Blanc, who had charge of our affair, used to come and interrogate the prisoners. We saw them pass through the court and enter a hall below our quarters. The fire which was

lighted when they were expected, smoked into my room, and gave me notice of their coming. There are no observers so attentive as prisoners. The great leisure, the paucity of amusement, the strong interest at stake, lead them to devote themselves entirely to this occupation. There is nothing that they will not do to discover the smallest particular.

Our judges, were frequently accompanied by the Abbé Dubois, and then we seemed to behold Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus. We used to watch the individual being led to undergo cross-examination, at which the Abbé did not attend. I prostrated myself on the floor in hopes of catching a few words, but it was impossible. No articulate sound reached us. At the most, one could hear either a low murmur or loud tones, and discern the warmth or tranquillity of the colloquy. Notwithstanding the inadequacy of such discoveries, we pursued them with unabated ardour.

I was anxiously awaiting the moment when the scene would become personal to me. I prepared answers to everything that I imagined could be said. My collection would have filled a volume. Not one proved of any use.

My turn did not come soon. Many others passed before me. When the Marquis de Boisdavis was called, they asked him how and where he had formed such a close connection with the Duc du Maine. 'I never saw him,' said he, 'nor his Royal

Highness either.' 'How is it then,' retorted the Minister, 'that you devoted yourself entirely to the interests of this Prince to the prejudice of the Regent?' 'As one takes a fancy for one player rather than for another,' replied Boisdavis. They could extract nothing more from him, although all the papers in his house had been brought from a distance at great expense.

Occupied as I was about more important matters than my own needs, I had made but scanty preparations for my departure, and I consequently found myself at the end of a few days in want of everything. I had nothing but the mob cap upon my head and no more shifts than the runaway heroine of a novel, without having, like her, the customary casket of jewels. I had no resource but the industry of my poor Rondel, who washed all my linen in a washhand basin. During this operation I tired my head with a white kerchief that was left. It was in this dishevelled condition that I received my first visit from the King's Lieutenant of the Castle. There is no situation in which a woman does not feel the annoyance of presenting herself to disadvantage to a person who has never seen her before.

This King's Lieutenant, Monsieur de Maisonrouge by name, was quite new to his place. He had formerly been a cavalry captain, and had never seen anything but his regiment. He was a straightfor-

ward soldier, full of natural good qualities, accompanied, but not disfigured by a certain roughness and rusticity of manner. He had originally objected to seeing either Mademoiselle de Montauban or me, replying to the Governor when he suggested that he should call upon us,

'What am I to say to those women? They will do nothing but scream and cry.'

On being assured that we should not be in such a state of despondency, he resolved to see us. He therefore came to me, and by way of a cheering speech, he told me that I need not feel any anxiety as to my position; that if the Duchesse du Maine had done wrong, I should not be held responsible, but would be excused on account of the necessity of obeying her behests. Such a suggestion struck me as suspicious, and I scarcely doubted that this man, whom I did not then know, had come to lay a snare for me. I assured him that I did not trust for my safety, to anything personal to myself, but to the conviction that no cause of complaint would be found against the Duchesse du Maine. I did not apprehend that her faults would rebound upon me; that if she had committed any in which I had participated I should not deem myself exculpated by obedience, such as ought never to be rendered. Surprised to hear such a tranquil reply from one whom he had expected to find in the acme of despair, he took a

liking to me from the first moment, and visited me very frequently.

In the midst of my destitution the Governor came to me followed by a bale containing all my clothes, and a purse full of gold. I should not have known whence came this welcome assistance if I had not recognised the purse as one I had formerly made and given to Monsieur de Valincourt. At a moment when my friends did not venture to know me, he was not afraid of owning me, and although for his master's sake he was specially bound to be prudent, he had asked leave of the Ministers, not only to render me this service, but also to send me every week an open paper with questions as to the things I might require. The paper had a broad margin on which, according to the permission he had obtained for me, I replied in monosyllables to each paragraph in the presence of the Governor, who brought it to me, and returned it to him.

This blessed relief never failed me from the moment it was granted, until I was restored to liberty; and Monsieur de Valincourt did not shrink from entering into the smallest details of everything that could be necessary or even agreeable to me, without even forgetting the concerns of my maid. Nor did he omit to have my furniture removed to his own house, lest it should be lost in the hired residence which was given up immediately on our

arrest. Such consistent attention in things so little striking were evidence of a true friendship whose active care did on my behalf everything that I could have done for myself had I been at liberty.

Thus relieved from the greatest troubles of my condition, I should have enjoyed the repose, had it not been disturbed by a fatal thought that haunted me perpetually. Some days before my imprisonment, the Abbé de Chaulieu had, while talking of the people who were being arrested, related to me some terrible stories of what took place at the Bastille; among others, of a lady of good position, who had been put to the question without trial, and had been so rudely handled that she was maimed for life. He maintained that this procedure was often employed without any formality, and that it was carried out by the servants of the house. This notion, which he had implanted in my mind, was enough to alarm me. I was held to be informed of the secret of the affair. I was no doubt supposed to be as weak as women generally are, and, moreover, I was a person of little importance. There was every likelihood that if this means were attempted, the choice would fall upon me. Struck by this idea, I had an extreme desire to ascertain its grounds, but I did not know how to set about it. One day, when talking to the King's Lieutenant, I ventured to lead the conversation to several practices which I had heard were usual

at the Bastille. He treated the greater number as idle tales. At last lowering my voice as one usually does when embarrassed, I observed that it was rumoured that people were occasionally put to the question without trial. We were walking up and down my room during this conversation. He took another turn and left me abruptly. I remained aghast and more convinced than ever of the sinister treatment designed for me. I thought my friend was aware of it and that this consciousness had closed his lips, and he was resolved neither to prevaricate on the subject of his office nor to increase the ills I was to endure by the foreknowledge of them. I continued walking with long strides in profound meditation. My only concern was to do my duty, and I was ready either to suffer or to die, but I feared lest excessive pain might overcome the strongest resolution, and I did not dare to answer for myself in a case in which I had not the guarantee of my own experience. I summoned to my aid the experience of others. 'Why,' said I to myself, 'should not I do what others have done? Horrible operations are borne to save one's own life. What can pain do? It extorts cries, but not articulate sounds.' After this cogitation I became more calm, and I hoped that, supported by strong motives, I might do what was not above the strength of nature. I afterwards perceived that our Lieutenant was deaf of one ear, and recollecting that

I had addressed my inquiry on the bad side, I laughed at the needless terror caused by his apparent circumspection.

I was not yet relieved from my terror when I was summoned to be examined by our Commissioners. I took the precaution of putting on a little rouge that I chanced to have in my pocket, although I was not in the habit of using it, to conceal if possible any change of countenance that might betray me. I had already been in prison three weeks when these gentlemen spoke to me. The Keeper of the Seals, with a sour look, desired me to sit down, and next to take off my glove. I took off the left one, not knowing what it meant. He bid me take off the right, and hold up my hand. I did whatever he desired, quite resolved to tell him only what I chose.

He asked me in what places, and in what manner I had passed my life. I replied that I had been in a convent from my birth upwards, until I went to the Duchesse du Maine. My history was short. He then observed that Her Highness had great confidence in me, and I answered that my sex and the position I occupied in her household did not correspond with any great confidence. He retorted that I was in the habit of spending part of the night with the Duchesse du Maine, and inquired what took place during that time. I stated that it was spent in reading her to sleep. Monsieur Le Blanc remarked

that it was not likely that the reading continued without intermission; and this I admitted. 'And what were the subjects of your conversation?' rejoined he. 'They usually referred to the subject of the book,' said I. 'The Duchesse du Maine is too lively,' persisted Monsieur Le Blanc, 'to discuss one subject for any length of time without touching upon others.' 'Precisely,' said I, 'and her conversations were so varied, that it would be impossible for me to remember them.' They added, 'you were secretary to the Duchesse du Maine?' I said that I had never borne the title or exercised the functions of a secretary; that I did indeed take care of her books, and that I partook in little discussions referring to this office. It was alleged that I had frequently written to the Librarian of the Royal Library. I replied that at the time she was writing papers on the affair of the rank, the Duchesse du Maine, requiring books which she obtained at the Library, had commissioned me to ask for them. I was then informed that they had possession of a number of letters that I had written to a certain Abbé. For a few moments I hesitated to answer, not being able to recollect what these letters were. At last calling them to mind, I said that they were probably written to an Abbé de Camus who had offered his services to the Duchesse du Maine and proposed to write on the dispute about the rank; but

that the incapacity of the individual had obliged her to accept only some of his researches regarding the matter in question, that she had desired him to communicate them to me, and that this commission had for a time occasioned the Abbé de Camus to write to me daily, to transmit his observations; that the Duchesse du Maine, touched by his attentions, useless as they were, occasionally ordered me to express her obligation to him. The letters themselves, I added, are a proof that there was no question of anything else. It was objected to me, that mention was made in them of the Constitution. I answered that I did not remember it; that I never concerned myself with matters that I did not understand, and for which I was so little competent. I was next told that a torn paper had been found in the Duchesse du Maine's room on the day of her arrest, and that it must have been I who tore it up. I affirmed that it was not. Then I was asked whether she was aware she was to be arrested. I said that rumours to that effect had reached her ears, but that she did not seem to take much heed of them.

I was always expecting them to ask me more perplexing questions, and supposed that it was merely to throw me off my guard that they talked of such trifles. I was mistaken. For that time, nothing more important was said.

Monsieur Le Blanc left the room to send notice

to some other prisoner whom they wanted to see. Monsieur d'Argenson when left alone with me enquired very graciously whether I was well treated, and showed that such was his intention, whence I inferred that I had been recommended in good quarters. In truth, the Marquise de Lambert had testified the interest she took in me, to one of her friends who had great influence with him.

I was pretty well satisfied with the manner in which I had acquitted myself on this first occasion, without seeming either embarrassed or intimidated, having said only what I meant to say, and having scarcely diverged from the truth. It seems to me, the mind when forced to some deviation from veracity, returns to it as naturally as a rotating body returns to a vertical position. I thought that I could now promise myself that I should sustain my part well to the last.

Feeling responsible for nothing but my own conduct; knowing, moreover, that princes always escape from difficulty, I ceased to disturb myself. I was extremely affected, however, when I heard that the Duchesse du Maine was imprisoned in the citadel of Dijon; but with the exception of a few distressing circumstances that I discovered from time to time, my life was pleasant and peaceful. I had even found more liberty than I had lost. It is true that in prison one does not follow one's own will, but on the other

hand, one does not obey the will of another. The absence of every kind of object removes desires, and the impossibility of gratifying any, stifles them at birth. It is not the same in servitude ; everything is simultaneously offered and denied to the wishes. In captivity, too, one is exempt from subjection, duties, and the formalities of society ; and, take it altogether, it is perhaps the place where one enjoys most liberty. At that time, at least, it appeared to me that this paradox might be supported by plausible arguments.

I did not experience in prison, the weariness which is so much dreaded. This feeling (if it be a feeling and not the entire privation of all) being incompatible with the agitation and anxiety which seized me at first, had no hold upon me. When I was calmer, I saved myself from it by the occupations that I made for myself, and by all the amusements that were offered, and of which I took care to avail myself. It is not the importance of things, it is our need of them that renders them precious. I was surprised to find what solace I derived from a cat, which I had asked for merely with the object of ridding myself of the mice that tormented me. The cat had kittens, and they again had more kittens. I had time to see several generations, and this fine family used to play and dance before me and afforded me much amusement, although I never much cared for animals of any sort.

I likewise acquired a taste quite new to me, for cards and needlework. All these things, in their place, were a relaxation from the serious reading which I made my chief occupation. This taught me that what renders the liveliest amusements insipid to those whose life is made up of them alone, is that they lose their true function, which is to rest the body or the mind when fatigued with exertion. It made me believe also, that every condition has its pleasures, even old age and infirmity. No other state gives rise to so many wants; their relief is more delightful than the enjoyment of benefits which have not been preceded by a sense of need. This reflection should diminish that dread of distressing positions, into which we are liable to fall. We look upon them as we look upon a residence in the torrid zone, which seems insupportable because we think only of the excessive heat, without remembering the winds and rains by which it is tempered.

I had passed more than three months in this peaceful abode when, towards the end of Lent, the Governor inquired whether I wished to perform the religious duties customary at Easter. I asked if I should be allowed to have a confessor of my own choice. The answer was in the negative, and I was told that I must be satisfied with the domestic chaplain, or not confess at all. I regarded all the officials with so much suspicion that I was tempted

to defer this duty to a more opportune occasion. Yet the necessity of fulfilling it, combined with the bad effect of a refusal, and the fear lest the Regent, who entered into the smallest details of our conduct, might draw unfavourable conclusions, decided me at all risks to make my confession. As I had various things to recall which might readily be forgotten, I petitioned the Governor for some paper that I might make memoranda. He said that he allowed nothing to be written that he did not read, but that on this condition he would grant my request. This unseemly joke served only to convince me of his excessive distrust, which I had previously experienced when I had besought him even on my knees, to write, with his own hand, a note to Madame de Grieu at my dictation, to relieve her from her dreadful anxiety as to my fate, and he had even then remained inflexible to all my entreaties, apprehending a secret meaning beneath the simple statements he would himself have written.

I relied therefore on my own memory for the correctness of my confession. Never was suspicion more unjust than that I had felt for our Chaplain. I found him the best of men, simple and compassionate, more inclined to pity my misfortune than to reprove me for my errors. I was very glad to have been so fortunate, and to have overcome the fear that had so nearly deterred me from

fulfilling a precept and an indispensable act of propriety.

At this conjuncture, the good faith which has always been inseparable from my actions, and my constant desire to do everything I undertook as well as was in my power, recalled me to habits of devotion. The bustle of political intrigues, the passions which mingle with them, and the dissipations of the world, had greatly distracted me. This new aid confirmed the tranquillity which I already enjoyed. And I witnessed without emotion, many things which might well have disturbed me.

To the great surprise of the world, which regarded him as one of the principal heads of the enterprise, the Comte de L—— had remained at liberty. I had taken it for granted that he had been arrested at the same time as ourselves, and I often asked Rondel, who did not know him, whether she did not see a tall spare man with a black beard, which he had worn since his jaw had been broken in war. At last she saw him arrive, about the time of which I am speaking, and exclaimed, 'Oh, there is the man with the beard.' I had had more negotiations with him than with anyone else, and although I trusted to the promises we had interchanged, I should have preferred to know that he was far off, rather than so near at hand.

The capture of Comte de L—— served as a

means of embarrassing the Marquis de Pompadour. The authorities were determined to extract a declaration from him, and he had hitherto persisted in keeping silence. As confessions made by the Count, speeches were adduced which he had made to him alone, and which were doubtless either mere conjecture, or else had been revealed by indiscreet confidants to whom Monsieur de L—— might have repeated them previous to his arrest; for after he was imprisoned, nothing could be elicited from him. However, Monsieur de Pompadour (who was not invulnerable), on the threat of being confronted with the Count, began to waver in his replies. The Ministers, finding him shaken, prepared a new battery to overthrow him. Maisonrouge, the King's Lieutenant, had formed a great attachment for him. Monsieur Le Blanc took him aside one day, and told him confidentially that he felt great interest in Monsieur de Pompadour, and that he was much distressed at the bad turn his affair was taking; that his trial was to be held, and that he would be beheaded unless he made a candid avowal of all that had taken place, with regard to which a full declaration was necessary, written in his own hand; that the Duke of Orleans would require a document of this description to justify his proceedings, and that it was the only means of preventing him from abandoning to the rigour of the law all the

persons compromised in this affair. Monsieur Le Blanc gave the King's Lieutenant to understand that he confided to him matters so profoundly secret, that he might induce the Marquis de Pompadour to take the only course by which he might be saved. Having thus touched the kind heart of Maisonrouge, without fearing that its impulses would be counteracted by the keenness of his wits, he looked forward to the success of a negotiation in which he had so well deceived the ambassador.

The poor Lieutenant, still quite alarmed at what he had just heard, rushed to Monsieur de Pompadour and imparted to him the whole of this confidential communication as to which, secrecy had not been enjoined. The Marquis caught the panic, and resolved to do all that was required of him. He made a general confession, neither disguising nor omitting anything. He did more; when one once begins to slip there is no pause till the bottom of the hill is reached. He had written that when he was discussing the present affair with the Duchesse du Maine, she broke off the conversation the moment the Duc du Maine appeared. The Keeper of the Seals, vexed at anything that tended to justify his Highness, told Monsieur de Pompadour that it was not an apology for the Duc du Maine that was demanded, and that he must erase this statement. He erased it, and did not impress

upon Monsieur d'Argenson that it was betraying his office not to receive impartially both favourable and unfavourable evidence.

The Duke of Orleans, who had treated persons of such distinction with so much rigour, and made such a sensation on comparatively slight grounds, thought only of putting a good colour on his own conduct. He was delighted to be in possession of the writing extracted from the Marquis de Pompadour, and flattered himself that fear or weariness would soon furnish him with similar documents from all of us. He declared he would have given a million for those that the Chevalier de Menil had thrown into the fire.

As a reward for his candour, the Marquis de Pompadour received, not the liberty which he had been led to expect, but the amusement of walking on the bastion, whither he was taken every day. I soon afterwards received the same favour, without having in any way deserved it. This grace was extended to several of us, who were taken out one after the other to walk with a safe escort, on the towers of the Castle. As a distinction, I had the last hour for my walk, and our Lieutenant, who became more and more attached to me, had reserved to himself the privilege of conducting me. On the last day of April, when he came to fetch me, he announced that Monsieur Le Blanc had just brought

an order to the effect that our walks were to cease on the first of May.

The strangeness of the day fixed for shutting us up, after exposing us to all the inclemencies of the weather, astonished me, and induced me to suppose that we had been purposely tortured under the name of pleasure. The King's Lieutenant explained that our profound politicians had opined that at a season when all the world goes out, the passers by, especially those who were interested in any of us, would come and spy us, that signals might be interchanged, and that this might lead to dangerous results. 'Alas, sir!' said I, 'they may ogle me far or near, I should see nothing.' When such an accident has befallen me, it was always necessary to inform me of it. And here, who would there be to tell me?

A short time afterwards an incident occurred which might have caused me greater sorrow than this privation. One fine morning, when we had been about four months in prison, I saw, leaving our Castle, three individuals who had been arrested at the same time as myself. They were Mademoiselle de Montauban, Monsieur de Malesieu, the son, and Monsieur Barjeton. The Governor guessed that I had noticed it, and thought it better not to make a mystery of the fact; he concluded that I should be in despair at witnessing the release of others with-

out my own, and he sought for reasons to reconcile me to the event. After exhorting me not to distress myself, he told me that it was a sign that my liberation was at hand. To the first part of his speech, I replied that I was far from feeling any increase of trouble at the cessation of unhappiness for my companions in misfortune; that it was, on the contrary, a relief not to feel any anxiety on their behalf. As to his prognostics, I let him know that they were of no avail, and that it was obvious that after the selection just made, those who were kept, would be kept for a long time.

I do not know whether it was as a consolation for this occurrence, that our walks were restored to us. I enjoyed a special favour which affected me more nearly. Our Lieutenant asked leave of Monsieur Le Blanc to give me ink and paper, simply to enable me to scribble down my thoughts. He consented, on the condition that the sheets of paper should be marked, and that I should return them by reckoning. This limited my choice of the topics I might otherwise have treated. I took a very serious subject, that no objection might be found. It consisted of moral reflections on some passages in Ecclesiastes. Other matters distracted me from continuing this work.

Monsieur de Maisonrouge, relieved of some of his cares by the departure of our comrades, redoubled

his attentions to me. He unconsciously formed the greatest attachment that anyone ever felt for me. He is the only man by whom I have believed myself to be truly loved, although, like every other woman, I have met with several who showed some feeling for me. This one said not a word of his, and I believed that I perceived his affection before he did. He was so much occupied about me that he talked of nothing else. I was his only topic of conversation with the other prisoners whom he visited, and he innocently believed that it was they who talked to him of nothing else. He returned to me quite enchanted with the esteem which they were supposed to feel for me. 'It is surprising,' he used to say, 'how much you are admired, and how greatly everyone here is interested in you. I constantly hear of it, and your praises meet me at every turn.' This became true in course of time, when it was observed what extreme pleasure it afforded him. Dependence gave birth to flattery; captives make use of it with their jailors as subjects do with their sovereigns. Maisonrouge's weakness being discovered, the people under his command, tried to win his favour by this means. Some sent me delicacies, others amusing books, each, according to what he chanced to have at hand, offered me a sort of homage which always passed through his hands.

The Chevalier de Menil availed himself of a dream

which he either had or feigned, to pay his court to the ruler. He told him one day (it was before some of the incidents which I have already related, so as not to break off the thread of my narrative) that on the preceding night he had dreamt his trial had been held (this is truly a prisoner's dream), and that he had been condemned to remain for ever at the Bastille, but in company with me, for I was never to leave it either, and that this circumstance had consoled him for the severity of the verdict. To Maisonrouge this appeared flattering to me on the part of one who had never seen me, and he did not dislike the idea of having me always under his charge. He came at once to regale me with the story. I scarcely know why I paid more attention to this than to the like tales he was in the habit of relating to me. Some days later, he went to see De Menil, who was not well, and the conversation having turned upon verses, he said, 'You ought to make some to amuse your neighbour.' His abode was opposite to mine. 'And how?' replied De Menil. 'I have neither pen nor paper.' 'There is no difficulty as to that,' said the Lieutenant; 'here is a pencil and some paper; write.' He wrote some verses made on the spur of the moment, on a scrap of paper which Maisonrouge conveyed to me, delighted to procure me this new diversion; and to make it more complete, he said, 'Answer in the same manner, and I will give you

what is requisite.' This beginning of an adventure pleased me extremely. I was most grateful to the King's Lieutenant for his amiability. I replied, therefore, in verses of a semi-Marotic character, as were those I had received. My answer was followed the next day by more, to which I was again required to reply. Maisonrouge saw nothing in this entertainment that could affect either the King or the State ; and perceiving that I was amused with it, he exhorted us to go on, and we were delighted to obey. As our poetry, informal as it was, hampered me a little, I intimated that prose, as being easier, would be more agreeable. The Lieutenant consented with the same kindness of heart, and every day he brought me an open letter and took back my reply. We occasionally mingled a few verses with the prose. One must either be or have been in a prison to know the value of such an amusement. Our verses were as bad as it was possible to be, yet I have carefully preserved them, as historical evidence of this strange adventure.

This intercourse between two invisibles became more and more gallant. I lent myself to it without scruple or anxiety. De Menil, however, was very curious to see me. He occasionally intimated it in his letters. I assured him that the point of our adventure was that we never met ; that in losing this advantage it would become commonplace and less exciting, and

our intercourse would be more constrained. Notwithstanding these sage opinions, he redoubled his entreaties to the Lieutenant to obtain an interview. At last he showed us to each other by placing us each on our own threshold. We were both somewhat petrified (perhaps by the abatement necessary in our reciprocal ideals). We did not speak, for such was the agreement, and in an instant we vanished. The letters which followed this apparition suffered from the injury it had done us. I perceived it, and this furnished some fresh jokes; we had already exhausted all that could be made of our first situation.

Prisoners are not easily repulsed. The Chevalier, thinking that greater resources would be open in a conversation than in a simple interview, told the King's Lieutenant that the favour granted to us was too small; that this was not to see each other; that in order to make acquaintance it was necessary to speak; and at last he succeeded in wresting this favour from him. The Lieutenant brought him to my room one evening. I was in bed, and, not to hamper the conversation, he left him by my side and amused himself a few steps off, in talking to Mademoiselle Rondel. A fresh embarrassment arose between us. Like Tonquin d'Armorique, who when he had found his sweetheart had not a word to say to her, the Chevalier also knew not what to talk about.

We both spoke a little, but on further acquaintance we were no better pleased with one another than we had been on the first introduction. Maisonrouge, perceiving that the conversation flagged, came to revive it, and with his assistance it throve a little better. The whole affair was so short that we had scarcely time to do more than recognise one another.

At this point we stuck fast. Our correspondence continued, but the diversion was beginning to lose the charm of novelty, and the little we had seen of each other had destroyed the ease and familiarity which formed its main attraction, while as yet, nothing else was substituted in their place. To put a stop to it, I made use of a pretext which chanced to offer itself. I sent word to the Chevalier de Menil that I was going into retreat in preparation for the festival (it was Whitsuntide, which the revival of my piety made me anxious to celebrate in due form), and that I considered writing to be a great distraction to a recluse. The tumult of the world does not perhaps afford so much to those who live in its midst.

The Chevalier de Menil accepted the reasons for my retreat as valid, and did not oppose my intention, whether because he respected my motives or because he had come to an end of his ideas. For my part, though I thought myself weary of the correspondence, I soon felt its loss. The void which replaced an amusement to which circumstances had given

animation made me aware that I cared for it far more than I had imagined. I felt extremely hurt at the slight resistance made to my proposition; and this sentiment was so disproportionate to its cause, that I begun to suspect another of a more serious nature. This apprehension, joined to my own vexation, assisted me in adhering to the arrangement. The faithful Maisonrouge became more attentive, more attached, and less successful than ever.

To meet with ingratitude, is always the destiny of devotion too faithful and too pure. He made me a sort of declaration that was rather ingenuous and quite unpremeditated. Madame de Réal, the most intimate of my friends (she was Mademoiselle de Grieu, who had married a short time before my imprisonment), frequently came to see him and procure tidings of me. He told me that one day, as he was escorting her to the door, she asked whether he took care of me, and that he had answered, 'How should I not take care of her, madame? They all say I am in love with her.' 'Would to God it were so!' replied she. The ingenuousness of this wish made me laugh, but I showed no signs of attending to the fact of the matter, respecting which he never came to any plainer explanation; but his whole conduct bore testimony to it. True affection could alone account for his unremitting attention, his unbounded

kindness, and his perpetual solicitude to give me pleasure, without any thought for himself. This desire was rather to gratify than to captivate me; indeed, he was so devoted to me that he seemed entirely to forget himself. I never saw anywhere in the world, nor even in novels, sentiments so perfect as were his sentiments, which never wavered, and were all the more admirable that they were not the effect of a refined intellect, but of simple nature, which seemed resolved to make one heart, in which there was no fault to find. Probity, honour, all the virtues that constitute a worthy man, were equally natural to him; and his mind, though neither shrewd nor cultivated, was truly upright and sensible.

The festival which occasioned my supposed retreat being over, I emerged from my seclusion. As a compensation for our past separation our Lieutenant brought the Chevalier de Menil to my room the next morning, and we had tea together with a certain air of freedom. He took him back to his own quarters a few minutes afterwards. But on quitting me the Chevalier skilfully let fall a note. Rondel, the maid, perceived it, picked it up, and joyfully brought it to me. She was delighted with anything that could amuse me. I found in it the following enigmatical words:—

Note.

'The wise legislator who is conscious of having enacted a law too severe ought to sanction its modification. The submissive subject awaits this acquiescence before allowing himself the slightest transgression. It remains to be known whether this law will be extinguished for ever, or only temporarily. In the latter case the tranquillity of the people will not suffer.'

This continuation of the adventure under a new form took my fancy, and led me into an act more decisive than any by which it had been preceded. I answered the note; I forget in what terms, but the purport was, 'Speak, and you will be heard,' and this answer was furtively given. Encouraged by the manner in which I appeared to sanction his designs, he became still bolder. He ventured to make his way into my room without a conductor.

The Lieutenant's apartment was above mine, to which he came at all hours, and, to save trouble, he was in the habit of leaving the key in my door. Menil, having opened his own by skill and force, found no difficulty in entering my quarters. He selected the hour at which the King's Lieutenant went to sup at the Control, a block of buildings separated from ours by two courts, and which was

The unexpected sight struck me with the greatest astonishment. Fear and anxiety, mingled with pleasure at the risk which a person in whom I was beginning to feel an interest, had encountered for the sake of seeing me, threw my feelings into a state of extreme commotion. The pleasantest emotions gained the upper hand and put the rest to flight. I listened to what he had to say. This was no less than the discovery of a serious attachment, hitherto veiled beneath the pleasantries which had been able to reach me. As some sort of foundation for these fine feelings, which I ventured to question, an old esteem was alleged to which my reputation had given rise. Anything tending to assure us of our own merits seems at least probable, and I did not severely scrutinise this matter. Being inclined to believe that the Chevalier du Menil considered me worthy of his love, and loved me, I abandoned myself to the conviction. Entirely absorbed by his speeches, I scarcely heeded my answers, thinking less of concealing or displaying my own feelings than of assuring myself of his.

The land in which we lived, greatly curtails formalities. Anywhere else, I should long have refused to listen, and still longer to reply; but in a place where, having once accomplished a meeting, it is uncertain whether one will ever meet again, perhaps more is said in a single hour than might have been

uttered in the course of years; and not only does one speak, but one also thinks quite otherwise than one does elsewhere.

This important conversation was not long, however. We were warned of the return of our masters to the Castleyard, by the click of the sentry's pike. It was the signal for us to part. The King's Lieutenant came, as usual, to wish me good evening on his return, and carefully and duly lock my doors, of which the keys, like all the rest, remained in his room for the night. Having no suspicion, he did not notice my absent manner, or attributed it to general causes.

When I found myself alone, I gave myself up to endless reflections on the recent occurrence. I went over the conversation, weighed each word, interpreted looks and manners, commented on hidden meanings, and from the first I followed the whole to its remotest consequences. Having reached the point at which objects grow dim and confused by distance and multiplicity, I retraced my steps, and in the strangeness of our acquaintance, and its singular results, I beheld the presages of an engagement which might go a long way. I did not wish to commit myself to anything that I might have cause to regret, and in spite of the inclination—which, heightened as it was, by the propitiousness of the place, was already leading me away—I resolved to

break off an intercourse which had now become dangerous.

In this frame of mind, I wrote a letter to the Chevalier de Menil, intimating that I had willingly assented to a mere pleasantry, but that now, when he had expressed himself in another tone, it was impossible for me to have any more communication with him, without belying the conduct of my whole life and the principles which I had laid down for its regulation; that I did not wish to add to the misfortunes in which fate had enveloped me, those into which imprudence might lead me, and which would be the more painful, as the blame would belong to myself alone.

My letter may not have contained a word of what I have written, but it was to much the same purport. It was an absolute dismissal, yet not such as to extort acceptance; nor was it accepted. I received an answer expressing his determination to overcome mine. Menil did not restrict himself to writing. He came again as he had done on the preceding evening. I wanted to send him away. He persisted in staying, and made all sorts of protestations of an unbounded and eternal attachment, such as I could never disapprove or repent of returning. I still insisted on my firm resolve of not embarking in such a perilous intercourse. I protested that the more he endeavoured to assure me of

the genuineness of his sentiments, the more he led me to fear them, and constrained me not to listen. All that can be said without raising one's voice, was said on either side, although in epitome. I ended by earnestly entreating Monsieur de Menil not to see me any more, and besought him to abandon all direct communication with me, as I did not wish to incur the risks which our situation would add to the ordinary dangers peculiar to intimacies of this description.

He left me with all the signs of extreme distress, yet submissive to my will. I was highly pleased with such a fine piece of defence on my part, although it cost me dear. I was losing the amusement of my solitude and all the resources offered by feelings fitted to occupy my mind. There was no means of recurring to the former frivolous intercourse, which had now lost its charm, and was moreover exhausted. But Menil was not so tractable as I imagined.

He wrote that he could not endure the course I had urged upon him; that he had made endless reflections, and found the means of securing his own peace without disturbing mine; that the only favour he asked, was permission to see me and impart his projects; that he flattered himself I should not be averse to them; and lastly, that whatever might be

my decision after this interview, he would submit to it without reserve.

I suspected what Menil wished to say, and I thought it right to give him a hearing. Moreover I had a great desire to see him again. I therefore consented to this new interview. He came. I received him with a melancholy air and some embarrassment. 'Well, sir,' said I, 'what more have you to say?' He remained silent for some moments, as if to restore order to his confused ideas. At last regaining speech, he said, 'As long as I only made empty harangues, you may have thought that I merely wished to charm away the weariness of my solitude. But I assure you that I intended to form a connection with you which might become closer. In the number of my questions, you must have observed an extreme desire to decipher your character, your tastes, your feelings, and to succeed more and more in ascertaining your real nature through all your attempts at concealment. Our friend,' he added, 'has told you a dream that I related to him. It was a waking dream. It was the result of the meditations I constantly made on the happy fate of anyone who might pass his life, in any place whatever, with a woman such as you. If this was my opinion when I knew you only on the testimony of others, only think what a more direct acquaintance with your mental qualities was capable

of adding to the idea I had formed of the felicity of being inseparably allied to you. It is this perfect bliss that I am desirous to secure, if my aspirations are agreeable to you. You were falsely alarmed at the offer I made. I should not have ventured it had my intentions been less worthy of you. I did not think, however, that they ought to be made manifest in my first conversations. It seemed fit that I should know with what sentiments I was able to inspire you before displaying the full extent of mine, and I should not yet have declared myself had I been able to endure the privation of all intercourse with you, to which you had condemned me.'

I had listened with astonishment and without interruption to this long discourse of the Chevalier de Menil. When he left off speaking, I told him that I could not fail to be deeply touched by his opinion of me, nor could I make a better acknowledgment than by declining his proposals; that it was my duty to inform him, if he did not already know, how disproportionate my position was to his; that I had neither name nor fortune, and that my sole possession was a humiliating and ineradicable title; that if he was already aware of my wretched condition I was bound to call his attention to it, and compel him to face the blame he would incur, and of which I did not wish to be either the cause or the occasion. He said that he was fully ac-

quainted with the state of my fortune, and in this respect felt no regret except that of not being able to offer me one better than his own; that the opinion of the world gave him no uneasiness, that he was certain of the approbation of sensible people, and did not think it necessary to sacrifice his happiness to the perverted judgment of the foolish multitude; that he had not declared his views without having examined them well, and without being fully fixed in his resolution; and I need not fear any alteration in it, since it had forestalled the passionate love which had now been added to the great esteem he felt for me; and that this affection would make him unspeakably miserable if I did not consent to see him as often as possible, until the time when, being liberated from his bonds, he was able to carry his plans into execution.

I conjured him to reflect on matters so important and beset with difficulty, and I told him that if, after mature deliberation, he persisted in wishing to ally himself to me for ever, I should consider it allowable to be with him as much as was proper in our situation, feeling assured that he would always observe a degree of respect consistent with the esteem which he expressed for me. He vowed that respect and submission would always be the chief evidence of the attachment which bound him to me for life. This compact being made, we parted. My heart

and soul were so full that both seemed motionless. I could not think or even feel distinctly. At last this chaos was reduced to order. I perceived that I was keenly touched by the feelings manifested towards me. I beheld a liberator who came to break the bonds of my servitude, to free me from a captivity more antagonistic to my nature than that which I was now undergoing, and who would put a climax to my happiness by associating my life with his.

It is only by right of supreme good, that objects are entitled to empassion us. It is only by assuming this aspect that they are able to take possession of our entire soul. I fancied that I had found that highest good which our desires constantly pursue, and never find. I did not then know that it exists nowhere in the world, and I thought it might be found in a constant and well-assorted union. Led away by flattering illusions, I allowed myself to be overcome by a love more ardent than that which I had inspired. I did not resist its progress; and, far from being alarmed by it, I regarded it as the measure of the bliss to which I looked forward. To understand how I could allow such empire to feelings which it may seem that I ought to have mastered, it is necessary to start from the point at which I stood, and recollect the various circumstances of my life, present and past.

The day following this conversation I received a letter from the Chevalier de Menil, overflowing with the sentiments most fitted to touch and reassure me. We met, as if by chance, in the apartment of the King's Lieutenant who was unwell. We had severally asked leave to visit him, and begged the favour of being taken to his room. Menil went first. I then proposed my visit, which was instantly accepted.

Maisonrouge, who had no suspicion of our mutual understanding, was enchanted at this meeting, To me it gave such intense pleasure that the moment is imprinted in my memory as one of the most delightful of my life. The fact of our secret connection being unknown to the interested witness who had formed its first links, added an unspeakable piquancy to the charm of meeting. It did not last long, for nothing lasts, especially in the Bastille. Anxiety allows nothing else to gain consistency. We found means of seeing each other on the days following. His intentions and protestations were reiterated, and I accepted them and gave vent to my feelings, much to his satisfaction. I found equal solace in concealing them no longer. We agreed to meet as often as was possible without imprudence, and to write as frequently as we could.

My beloved Rondel lent her services in giving and receiving our letters, watching the fit moments

for meeting, and guarding us from surprises. Her opinion of me was sufficiently high to assure her that I was forming such a connection only on good grounds, and she would not have given her assistance, if by what I allowed her to perceive she had not had reason to judge it favourably.

The Chevalier de Menil was, like myself, aware that Maisonrouge was deeply in love with me. We felt how essential it was to conceal our correspondence, which was no longer under his control. The more interesting letters which we now wrote had wearied us of those that passed through his hands. He remarked upon our negligence in this respect, and reproached me with it. I wrote a few more notes to allay his suspicions, and to colour the apparent cessation of our epistles.

Letters of this description became intolerable, and were soon entirely dropped. We wrote to each other, and we snatched moments of conversation. I shall record one which I have not been able to forget, in which I testified endless fears and anxieties at having abandoned myself to my feelings on the strength of appearances that might be doubtful, and he offered to enforce the assurances he had given of his intentions by a written engagement. 'Alas!' said I, 'of what use would it be? If you preserve your affection for me you will adhere to the resolution it has induced you to take; if you chance to lose it, do

you imagine that I would oppose your promises to your feelings, or wish to live with you if you were not entirely mine of your own free will?'

In speaking thus I thought that I was supposing impossibilities. We seemed to suit each other so perfectly that it recalled to me the notion of the souls that are created double, who always seek and rarely find each other, and whose happy meeting constitutes supreme felicity. I imparted this idea to him, and he accepted it as the true character of our connection. I then made experience of a happiness hitherto unknown to me. I had formerly loved without being loved, or else I had been beloved without returning the affection. I had not yet known the charm of a mutual attachment which seemed unalterable. The character of the Chevalier de Menil, his reputation, his moderation, his age, already beyond that at which one is apt to make engagements without knowing what one does or what one wants; all these were a guarantee for his constancy and the fidelity of his promises. I had no other anxieties than those that sprang up beneath our steps in a soil so calculated to produce them and to promote their growth. This sort of disquietude encountered us at every turn; the slightest noise threatened us with formidable consequences; the mere gloomy look of a jealous master (for he was becoming jealous without knowing how much reason

he had for being so) was a presage of everything most terrible.

The arrangement we had made for meeting continued until the Duc de Richelieu was transferred from a tower, in which he had been placed at first, to an apartment above the Chevalier's. The proximity of a man so wide-awake necessitated the greatest precautions. The King's Lieutenant thought it right to keep better guard over the keys which he was in the habit of leaving in my door, by which the inhabitants of that region passed in going out for their walk. Although they were always well-escorted, this subject of scandal was not to be exposed before their eyes.

The reader (if this manuscript ever has a reader) would prefer to hear why the Duc de Richelieu was sent to the Bastille, and to hear the details of his affair, rather than these particulars concerning myself, but I know too little about the matter to give an account of it. I only know that, like ourselves, and without our participation, he had been in communication with Spain; that notwithstanding the most severe treatment, and the long and frequent examinations which he underwent, besides all manner of crafty devices to take him by surprise, his secret could never be detected, and that at last by court intrigues, in which love played an important part, he obtained his release, and meanwhile, great

indulgences in his captivity. The more comfortable quarters now assigned to him, and the liberty of going out to walk, led to the reform which threw us into despair. The same precaution had always been observed when the Ministers were expected, but that was only for a day, and that day had been hard to endure. There is no habit so readily contracted as that of seeing the object of one's affections. I therefore began to experience the crosses which follow the passions and render them so painful. I had already experienced some of them through the whims of Menil, who, contrary to all reason, was occasionally vexed at the indispensable civilities which I could not deny to our Lieutenant, although I restricted them as much as possible. I had revoked the permission to visit me after his supper, under the pretext that I wished to go to sleep. He never resisted any of my fancies; yet on my side it was occasionally necessary to give way to his wishes.

One day, when he was supping with me, Menil, who possessed the secret of opening his own door, came to listen at mine. He maintained that I had been very lively, and had spoken of him with offensive lightness. But what displeased him still more was that on rising from table, as it was extremely hot, we went to the window. The Lieutenant asked me to sing. I began a scene from the opera of 'Iphigenia.' The Duc de Richelieu, who

was also at his window, sang the reply of Orestes in this scene, which was appropriate to our situation. Maisonrouge, thinking it amused me, or perhaps willing to make sport, allowed us to finish the whole scene. It was by no means amusing to the Chevalier de Menil. The next day he catechised me in his letters, as to the conversation at supper, which I was not aware that he had overheard. I had forgotten that his name had been mentioned, and did not allude to it. He thought I was making a mystery, and was so much annoyed that he wanted me to quarrel with Maisonrouge. I was able, however, to show him so clearly the great inconveniences to which this course would give rise, that he was finally appeased.

We were not long without finding means of coming together again. The reform was relaxed, as reforms always are, and we resumed much the same life as before. The short parting, softened by frequent letters, only served to give more value to the pleasure of meeting. For some days we enjoyed it in tolerable peace. The gloomy temper of the Lieutenant convinced us that he entertained suspicions and closed his eyes. This idea rendered us less cautious. After having been imprudent we grew bold. We prolonged our conversations, and we were several times in danger of being caught. At last one evening, when Menil was about to with-

draw for fear of accidents, I indiscreetly detained him. A moment after, and earlier than usual, the turnkeys, who had for some time suspected us, came to give the last touch to our doors, and carried off our keys, with those of the other prisoners, to the apartment of the King's Lieutenant.

I cannot describe the terror that seized me when I heard them lock us up. What was to be done in such dreadful circumstances? The only thing I saw clearly, was that the Chevalier de Menil could not remain shut up in my room. That he should be there by day was merely an infraction of a local rule or custom, but that he should spend the night would be deemed a scandal in every country. But how was he to go? The doors were barricaded in such a manner that nothing could be attempted in that quarter. The windows were equally inaccessible. I had no resource left but in the mercy of poor Maison-rouge, to whom a serious insult was offered by the present difficulty. At last I armed myself with all the courage supplied by necessity so urgent, and I placed myself at the window to await his return from the Governor's, with whom he was supping.

The moment he entered the yard I called to him and begged him to come and wish me good evening. He flew to his own quarters to fetch the key, and came to me in an ecstasy of delight at this unwonted favour. I advanced to meet him, and his

rival, standing somewhat in the background, did not at first present himself to view. I said, with an air of extreme embarrassment, 'You taught my neighbour the way to my apartment. He has indiscreetly ventured upon it without your escort. They came and locked us up; you would not leave him here; relieve me of him, I conjure you.' At the first word I uttered, he perceived the Chevalier de Menil and changed countenance. The cheerful expression with which he had entered, suddenly took the gloomiest hue, and he told us, in a very dry tone, that it was putting him into a great difficulty; that it was impossible for him to go up to fetch Monsieur de Menil's keys, and come down again, and open the door, without attracting the notice of his own people and the officials of the house, who would draw inferences equally unfavourable to himself and to me. I admitted that he had reason to complain of our imprudence; I owned my fault; I promised not to repeat the offence, and I invoked his friendship as my only resource. He left me without another word, fetched the keys, and came for Menil, looking more disconcerted than either of us; and finally shut him up in his own room without returning to me.

This done, I felt greatly relieved, although there was still much cause for regret. The just indignation of a man to whom I owed so much, and whom,

to follow my own fancies, I was exposing to the reproach of betraying his office by shameful indulgences, my own duplicity towards one who had given himself up to me without reserve,

Improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis;

and lastly, this cruel tyrant himself was groaning at the bottom of my heart over my separation from the object which he had rendered so dear to me.

I could not doubt that the Lieutenant, whose honour and jealousy were alike interested in guarding me, would henceforth keep watch close enough to frustrate any attempts that it was in our power to make. This mischance had destroyed my taste for hazardous proceedings, so I restricted myself to intercourse by letter, which was easily managed and became more frequent.

Maisonrouge saw me as usual, and made no allusion to the past. He perceived that I was sad, but did not ask me the reason, which he was only too well aware of. I was sometimes unjust enough to hate him, and he may have been conscious of it without making any change in his conduct, which was always full of attention and forethought. He brought me tidings of Madame de Grieu and others of my friends, and allowed me all the little liberties compatible with propriety and his own duties. During my sane moments my reason reconciled me

to him, and I felt the sense of gratitude which I owed him.

But Menil, who had less at stake than I had, unremittingly sought means of renewing the former state of things. By money or promises, I know not how, he won over one of the turnkeys. These are the people who wait upon the prisoners, bring them food and everything they require. The keys are in their hands all day long. This man, therefore, in leaving my room only pretended to shut the door, and Menil entered, while the Lieutenant was dining with the Governor. I was alarmed at seeing him, and wished to send him away. He pacified me, and assured me that there was no risk in the means he had employed. I believed him, for I had a strong wish to believe. The pleasure of seeing him again, dissipated the sage reflections which prohibited such perilous interviews. This one was very short, and was repeated only with the greatest precautions. I would not risk myself again at the evening hour which had proved so fatal to me, and we conducted our folly (for it was a great folly to see each other again) as reasonably as possible. If we met but little, we wrote to each other perpetually. The great leisure that we enjoyed, could not be occupied in a more interesting manner.

The first letters that we wrote on this footing were not returned to me, for the Chevalier de Menil,

more timid at that time, was careful to burn them. Afterwards, either more hardened or more anxious to preserve them, he omitted this act of prudence and returned to me all that remained, when I had occasion to ask for their restitution. I shall tell in due time how they were saved from the fire, and what induced me to keep them.

The little facts which they contain, are the tissue of this adventure. They are the original documents attesting its truth, and in which I have found some of the things that had escaped me. They are a substitute for our conversations, which were always disturbed by fear, curtailed by prudence, shorter and more disjointed than our written communications, and hence almost entirely obliterated from my memory.

Our want of occupation produced an innumerable multitude of these letters. The love to which I had thought it allowable to abandon myself without offence either to reason or virtue is expressed in them without reserve. I was speaking to a person to whom I considered myself as already united by the most sacred ties, only awaiting the end of our captivity to render the engagement indissoluble and authentic.

In these early days of our engagement I was making the experience of perfect happiness without foreseeing the slightest interruption of it, when one

day when we thought ourselves more secure than ever, because the King's Lieutenant was gone to dine at Vincennes with his friend and former colonel, the Marquis du Châtelet, Monsieur le Blanc came to the Bastille to tell the Governor that he required some explanation of an affidavit made by the Chevalier de Menil, and that he must speak to him at once. The Governor, who was at table, left his dinner and ran so quickly that Menil had not time to return to his own quarters. The Governor found his room vacant. But Menil followed him closely enough to meet the brunt of his wrath, of which a part rebounded upon me. After the first violent explosion, he executed the Minister's commission and reported the answer without mentioning the incident of which the blame would have been laid to his want of vigilance. But as soon as Monsieur le Blanc was gone, he had the Chevalier de Menil transferred to a tower in which he was lodged in a sort of dungeon, at a great distance from my apartment.

The severity of this treatment and the bad effect of such a precipitate change of quarters overwhelmed me with grief. Contrary to custom, I abandoned myself to tears and despair. Never was my heart so painfully affected; I felt as if it were divided from itself without hope of reunion.

I supposed Menil to be as much distressed as I

was. His sorrow did not merely double mine, it multiplied it indefinitely. The physical discomforts that he would undergo in this horrible abode, combined with mental distress, made me tremble for his health and even for his life, for a distracted mind stops at nothing. My uncertainty as to all these matters and the impossibility of hearing of him, put a climax to my despair.

The absence of Maisonrouge on that day left me without any consolation. In spite of all my offences I still expected everything from him. I was only so far mistaken, that he far exceeded my highest expectations. He came to me in the evening, on his return. The Governor had already informed him of what had happened. The tender interest which he took in my state, allowed no place in his heart for anger or resentment against my misdeeds, or he overcame his feelings so well that I perceived no indications of them. He deplored the misfortune that had befallen me, and assured me that he would do anything in his power to procure me consolation.

Deeply touched at finding such favourable dispositions in one from whom I so little deserved them, I did not dissimulate my feelings; I thought I might pour them into the bosom of such a true friend. I imagined that, however bitter it might be, it would be softened by this proof of my esteem and reliance, and that, far from inflicting a fresh

wound by confessing what he already knew, I should apply the only remedy in my power to the old ones. I therefore resolved upon a frank avowal. I told Monsieur de Maisonrouge that it was to his endeavours to furnish me with diversion in my misfortune that I owed my acquaintance with the Chevalier de Menil; that, like him, I had intended to make it a mere amusement; but that habit and want of occupation had led me to become attached to an intercourse that at first had only diverted me; that sentiments had been expressed by which I had allowed myself to be touched, and that at last feelings had arisen in my own heart which had led me into all the transgressions he had witnessed, and I begged him to pardon them. I was silent. He remained for some time as if overwhelmed by the confusion of his own thoughts. The emotion produced by the signs of my confidence and repentance was manifest in his countenance, and at last, making an effort to speak, he said, 'My dear friend' (for so he was accustomed to call me), 'you know that I am devoted to you. I am about to give you indubitable proof of it; but you must tell me what are the terms of your engagement with Monsieur de Menil. If he intends to render your lot happier (since mine is not worthy to offer you), I will unreservedly comply with anything that may conduce to your happiness or even

to your pleasure. If the Chevalier de Menil has no further design than to captivate you, it would be unworthy both of you and of me that you should keep up any communication with him through my mediation, and your own self-respect compels you to detach yourself from him.' 'From the time,' said I, 'that the Chevalier de Menil tried to change the tone of pleasantry in which we had begun I refused to listen to him, and I persisted in my refusal until he manifested his intention of uniting his fortunes to mine. I represented to him all the objections, and it was only when I had assured myself that it was his real purpose, that I consented to hold this interview with him. No other mark of his affection would ever have induced me to belie the conduct I have always maintained. It is true that I did not consider myself to be deviating from it by responding to feelings in harmony with virtue, and which could not allow me to forget it.' 'But why,' rejoined Maisonrouge, 'conceal from me, who am called your guardian' (some of my friends gave him this name), 'from me, who am so passionately desirous to promote your welfare, projects in which it is so deeply concerned? Did you doubt that I should favour them with all my power?' 'Do not impute to me,' said I, 'a secrecy which was so distressing to me. It was exacted from me so positively that I should scarcely yet venture to reveal

the truth, if it were not indispensably due in the present conjuncture, both to your kindness and my own honour.'

'The Chevalier de Menil ought not to have imagined,' rejoined Maisonrouge, 'that I should have blamed his intentions, or to have feared that I was able to cross them. But let us say no more. We must see what I can do to help you out of your trouble.'

'I am exasperated,' I replied, 'with your Governor for the commotion that he has made. Prisoners are all eyes and ears; it is in vain to shut them up: they find out everything that happens. They think themselves concerned in the smallest movement they perceive, and they follow it up to the end. You need not doubt that the hasty transfer of the Chevalier de Menil is known to everybody here, and receives a bad interpretation for me. Pray make the Governor feel how much reason I have to complain of his having imputed a history to me which, not being thoroughly understood, may do me great injury. Tell him that I wish to speak to him myself, and persuade him to come and see me.'

I will go at once,' said Maisonrouge, 'and I will also see the Chevalier de Menil, and bring you a good report. Don't disturb yourself, and rely absolutely upon me.'

He left me, and I relapsed into the state of despondency from which I had been roused by the necessity of speaking to him.

All the miseries that I endured and all those that I apprehended, pressed so heavily upon me that I could scarcely breathe. Poor Rondel did what she could to console me by wise discourses and vain hopes, but I heard nothing but the confused sound of the passions by which I was agitated. I spent a terrible night. The horrors of darkness seem to give fresh force to the objects which torment us. The moment that day dawned, I gave myself the relief (if it was a relief) of writing a letter to Menil, which I was not able to send. I wrote him another also in this sad state. It was not till long after that he received them.

I did not see the Lieutenant again until the next day. He informed me that the Chevalier de Menil, nettled by the unworthy treatment he had received, had spoken very angrily to the Governor, and had irritated him profoundly. Maisonrouge told me this distressing news as gently as he could.

I felt the troubles thus prepared for Menil. The Lieutenant told me that at the moment of the catastrophe Monsieur le Blanc had brought a permission to put Menil in company with the Duc de Richelieu (whose bonds were to be relaxed), and to allow them both to dine with the Governor alter-

nately with the Marquis de Pompadour and de Boisdavis, who had their own day for going; and that the Governor, without mentioning it to the Minister, had decided not to allow this liberty to Monsieur de Menil. I was extremely sorry to see him deprived of an alleviation of his captivity so well suited to soothe his present melancholy. I implored the Lieutenant to use every means to reconcile him with the Governor, that he might at least profit by the Minister's favours, and not undergo fresh vexations. He promised that he would do all in his power, and ultimately succeeded. He brought me news of Monsieur de Menil's distress, of the state of his health, and of all that concerned him, with all the detail that I could desire; he also informed me of what he had said to the Governor in my behalf, and told me that I should see him, and advised me to express my just indignation without forgetting the tact that must be used in dealing with people on whom one is dependent.

He came, and I told him that after so many marks of regard as I had received from him, I had no reason to expect that, without heeding the injury he was inflicting on my reputation, he would have made such an exhibition of an irregularity of conduct on my part, which was in fact an irregularity only with regard to the place I inhabited; that since I had lived in the world I had received

indifferently everybody who came to see me, men or women, without causing a shadow of scandal, and that since I had been under his guardianship, the fact that my maid was imprisoned with me, guaranteed the propriety of the visits I might have received; that the thing was innocent in itself, and that any equivocal interpretation given to my conduct was due solely to the commotion made about the affair. In vain I tried to make him understand that what was a fault in a prisoner was not a fault according to the ordinary rules and usages of society; he knew no rules but those of the Bastille, and would never acknowledge the distinction; he maintained that after a licence so criminal, I ought to be grateful to him for not having treated me with greater severity. He gave me to understand that I ought to have been sent to the dungeon. In prison this is such a common threat, that it is made to a barking dog. After similar discourses we parted, only moderately satisfied with each other, and we remained on cool terms. He had shown me great attention at first, but the rumour having spread, even to the Tuileries, that he wanted to marry Mademoiselle de Montauban, an idea which had not occurred to him, he absented himself from his captives, and since I had seen that he was a bear that could not be tamed, I had paid him but little attention.

The King's Lieutenant redoubled his kindness to me. Not content with all that he had done already, and anxious to afford me fresh consolation, he made the Chevalier de Menil write me a letter, which he brought me. I was surprised at an action so singular on the part of a jealous lover. 'I should have been satisfied,' said I, 'to hear tidings of Monsieur de Menil through you; it was unnecessary to go further.'

'No,' replied he, 'you will be more reassured by this witness from his own hand, than by anything you have only from my lips; write him an answer, and I will give it to him, and I promise to procure you this satisfaction as long as your separation lasts.' He afterwards told me that he was working at the reconciliation of the Chevalier de Menil with the Governor, that it was progressing favourably, and that he hoped he would soon be allowed to enjoy the society appointed for him.

All these things were as balm to my soul. It was a great joy to me to see the handwriting of Menil, of which I had been deprived for several days. It gave me no less pleasure to write him a letter that he would receive. To amuse my sorrow I had already written several, which remained on my hands. This one, in a more constrained style, was to have a happier fate. I dared not give vent to my thoughts, but still it was speaking to him.

Our generous friend came to fetch it. I gave it to him open, as was the one which he had brought. This effort of his kindness required the most discreet management on my part, and I always waited for him to suggest rendering a service that was so painful to him. He afterwards confessed to me that every time he took or gave our letters, he was plunging a dagger into his own heart. He was none the less punctual in adhering to the order he had fixed for our communications. He used to bring me a letter ; the next day he asked for the answer, and on the day following he brought me another.

Meanwhile, Monsieur de Menil, having been reconciled with the Governor, was enjoying the prerogatives granted him by the Court. He went to dine at the Control with the Duc de Richelieu one day out of two, and spent part of the day in the apartment of this pleasant companion. He could not go there without passing my door. This facility for giving me more private tidings of himself than those which passed through another hand, was a temptation to him. He dropped a note, to which he urgently besought me to reply by the same means. I felt great repugnance to this proceeding, less from the aversion I had taken to hazardous courses than on account of the character of treachery which this furtive correspondence would

bear towards my kind friend. Neverthless I consented, led astray by that degrading passion which debases all our virtues, and which ought to be as odious as it renders us contemptible.

It is true that at first I seldom used these new means that were offered to us; but in course of time I became accustomed to them. It sometimes chanced that I encountered Menil on his way to or from the Duc de Richelieu. This made an event in my life. Poor Maisonrouge occasionally contrived these meetings, which, though short, were very precious to me.

I did not long enjoy this privilege; some repairs necessary in my apartment obliged me to leave it. Another was offered to me, which would have afforded the same facilities, but I refused it, more from the fear of abusing them, than from dread of a noise that would have made it impossible to sleep. The room of the Captain of our Company of Guards was lent to me, whence I could have no more communication with the Chevalier de Menil.

For some time past, all our comrades had enjoyed a sort of liberty, forming separate groups, with which they were allowed to associate. I was advised to apply for the same favour, but I refused to do so. It seemed to me that the best part for me to play was that of entire inaction. It was all

I could do to accept favours from the hand that bound me in chains, but I considered it as base to ask for them, and a disgrace to seem so weary of myself as to seek company that was indifferent to me, and which I fancied would in fact be rather burdensome than agreeable. All that I could do, out of deference to the advice given me, was to write the following letter to Monsieur le Blanc.

Letter.

'Monseigneur, — It is neither impatience nor weariness that obliges me to trouble you. What determines me to do so, is the reasonable apprehension lest a person so obscure as myself might be entirely forgotten. This fear is the better founded as it is little likely that the causes of my detention should recall me to memory. I flatter myself that they are as little notable as I am. And I therefore feel it necessary to remind you that I was sent to the Bastille at the end of the year 1718, and that I am still there. When I am assured, Monseigneur, that you are aware of this fact, I shall rely, for the rest, on your justice and benevolent nature; feeling satisfied in whatever position I may be, to defer to the laws imposed upon me, and to pay honour to the sovereign power by ready sub-

mission to its commands. I have the honour to be, with profound respect, Monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant.'

This 16th day of August, 1719.

This letter produced no effect; and such was my intention. But the importunities of the Marquise de Pompadour with the Ministers to enlarge the society of her husband, procured my admission to this select circle. I therefore went with him and the Marquis de Boisdavis to dine with the Governor on the day appointed for us. It was thought right that my companion should eat with us, that I might not be the only woman in a society of men. It was proposed that I should keep the table on the day that the other party dined at the Control. To avoid the everlasting abode that such idle folk would have made in my room, I preferred to establish our meals on those days in the apartment of Monsieur de Pompadour. The Duc de Richelieu had then obtained his liberty by the sacrifice of a fair victim, who, it is said, had voluntarily offered herself up at that price.

Since his departure, the Chevalier de Menil had been associated with the Marquis de Saint-Genies, and Davisard, one of the Ministers of our Court. The latter sent me word that he was passionately desirous to have a moment's conversation with me.

I took it for granted that he had some matters of importance to communicate, the knowledge of which might regulate my course of proceeding.

Yet I would not tempt the kindness of the King's Lieutenant in a case which compromised his duty, for which, where essential matters were concerned, I felt as much respect as he did. I sought for fraudulent means, which are always allowable to those who are deprived of their natural social rights.

The Marquis de Saint-Genies lived in the same tower as the Marquis de Pompadour. I thought that Davisard, pretending to visit Saint-Genies, whom he was allowed to see, might go a storey higher to the Marquis de Pompadour, in whose apartment I should be as usual. It was only a question of choosing the time, and warning my associates that they might abet in the meeting. I therefore informed Messieurs de Pompadour and de Boisdavis of the interview I was meditating, and congratulated them on all the news I was to hear, and the useful counsels I might glean for the whole party. The Marquis de Pompadour, delighted to be of service to me on such an important occasion, was devouring in advance, the rich harvest in prospect for us. I communicated my scheme to Davisard. Its execution was awaited with like impatience by all parties, but it was necessary to choose a day

on which one of our masters was in company, and the other so fully occupied that we had nothing to fear from him.

The day came. At every loophole in the staircase we placed such servants as we had, to warn us on the slightest alarm. All our measures being taken, we sent word to Davisard, who was awaiting the moment in Saint-Genies' apartment. He came up immediately, and the Marquis de Pompadour, on seeing him appear, retired with Monsieur de Boisdavis into a corner of the room, thinking that matters of such importance could not be uttered in the presence of other people. Davisard, having looked all round to ascertain that we were out of hearing, approached me, saying: 'Mademoiselle de L——, nine months of celibacy is hard to bear!' 'Sir,' exclaimed I, in the greatest astonishment, 'is that what you were in such a hurry to tell me?' Alarmed at this opening, I summoned our discreet confidants, and told them that they might come near and take part in the conversation. They discussed the present state of affairs, as to which our little magistrate was no better informed than we were. Seeing the small advantage to be gained by this perilous interview, I put a speedy end to it, ashamed of having contrived it with so much care.

What had happened to me some months before ought to have made me wiser. I had an indispo-

sition, for which I was to see Monsieur Herment, the physician of the Bastille. The King's Lieutenant introduced him to me in the garden in which we were walking. Although I was at that time under the closest guard, our Lieutenant was always willing to relax it in my favour on the smallest pretext that warranted his doing so. 'There must be no third person in a conversation with the doctor,' said he, as he left us. I continued my walk, and went still further off. Monsieur Herment, seeing that we could no longer be observed, said in a suppressed tone as he squeezed my hand: 'You have friends, and very good friends, ready to do anything for you. I have seen one who is particularly interested in all that concerns you.'

'Did he give you any message for me?' said I, interrupting him.

'Yes,' he replied; 'he knows my discretion, and I know yours. He told me to ask what could give you pleasure, or be of use to you; and whether you would like a coverlet?'

'Oh!' said I; 'and who may this friend be, who wishes to know whether our feet are kept warm in the Bastille?'

'It is Monsieur Bignon, Counsellor of State,' replied he.

'Pray give him my best thanks,' I rejoined, 'and tell him that the subject of his anxiety is cer-

tainly the smallest of the discomforts to which I am exposed.'

I did not feign any illness to procure visits from a man so prudent. There were others in our Castle who were more amenable, but as I had no temptation to intrigue beyond the walls, I did not cultivate their favour.

The Comte de L—— availed himself of the assistance of the surgeon, who also acted as apothecary. That he might see him frequently, he gave out that he required his ministrations twice every day. The Regent, who entered into the smallest details respecting us, was examining our chemist's bills with his Ministers, when the Abbé Dubois exclaimed at the quantity of drugs employed. The Duke of Orleans said: 'Well, Abbé, as they have no other amusement than taking physic, we will not deprive them of that one.'

L—— in truth had no others. He was kept more strictly than any of us, even when some relaxation was allowed to the other prisoners. It must be said that since he had been in the Bastille, L—— had behaved heroically; he sustained long and frequent examinations with courage and dexterity. But it was supposed that before his arrest he had made false confessions in the hope of escaping imprisonment. However that may be, he maintained the firm demeanour which he had as-

sumed on his entrance, until the end of his imprisonment, which lasted much longer than that of the others.

I always kept up my correspondence with the Chevalier de Menil through the King's Lieutenant. I sometimes received more unconstrained letters through his servant, whom Menil had gained over. I was solely occupied with him, and the society which was inflicted upon me, was often insupportable, especially in moments of depression which I could not overcome. I experienced a very severe one when the Chevalier de Menil informed me of his intention of sinking in a life annuity a sum of money which he had recently received. This intention seemed to me in direct opposition to that which formed the object and support of our connection. It gave me suspicions of his good faith, such as had not before entered my mind. I expressed them keenly in my letters, and as he did not wish to lose me yet, he reassured me by changing his projects and making fresh protestations of the sincerity and steadfastness of his intentions. I believed him. What does one not believe when one longs to believe it? He confirmed my opinions by the purchase of a small estate in place of the life annuity he had originally contemplated.

I returned to full confidence and had no further distress except the length of our separation, which

was rendered all the more vexatious by the facility of associating with me which was given to people for whom I did not care. They did not regard me in the same manner, and this added to my impatience. A good author has said, a gardener is a man to the inmates of a convent, and certainly a woman, whatever she may be, is a divinity to prisoners. They indeed offered me a sort of worship, but their zealous adulation and their incense well-nigh suffocated me at times.

About this period Davisard fell seriously ill; he was a man of an eager and petulant disposition, restless in body and mind, less capable of staying in one place than of multiplying himself so as to be in several at once. His illness was reported, and perhaps exaggerated to the Regent, who was always averse to acts of violence, and did not wish his prisoners to play him the trick of dying in prison. To avoid this accident Davisard was liberated. 'Is it a hoax?' said he, in Gascon dialect, when he saw the warrant. 'No,' replied the Governor who had brought it, 'it is genuine.'

'Stockings! brushes! quick, quick!' cried he, springing out of bed.

His toilet, his departure, and his cure were the work of a moment. On his departure, Madame de Pompadour, who was always eager to alleviate the monotony of her husband's life, begged

that his society might be increased by the fragments of Monsieur Davisard's, whose companions were the Marquis de Saint-Genies and the Chevalier de Saint Menil, and that the two parties might be amalgamated and allowed to dine every day with the Governor and live together. Her petition was granted, and when I was least expecting it, I beheld Menil enter my room without precautions. I was surprised and frightened; he reassured me by announcing this happy event which filled me with delight, although I had recently heard of the death of my sister, the circumstances of which had given rise to very bitter feelings. To the disgrace of Nature, it must be confessed that her voice does not make itself heard when any passion speaks at the same time.

Messieurs de Pompadour and de Boisdavis entered a moment later, to congratulate me on the addition to our society. The King's Lieutenant had gone to dine at Vincennes that day, and came to me on his return, not knowing of the liberty granted to the Chevalier de Menil. The instant he saw him in my room in such good company, with all the appearance of having the right to be there, he stood as if thunder-struck, speechless and motionless. I was touched by his distress, and going up to him I told him that Madame de Pompadour had been the means of bringing us together. He had known that she had asked it, but he did not think she would

gain her point so soon. He said in a constrained manner that it was quite right and proper, and offered us his congratulations. He could not utter a word more, and remained as if petrified on a seat on to which he had dropped. The gaiety of the party put a finishing touch to his trouble, and after a time, unable to bear a position so painful, he left us.

The relations that I had hitherto maintained with the Chevalier de Menil, distressing as they were to Maisonrouge, were softened by the satisfaction of testifying his own affection for me, and having the control over our correspondence. Our consequent dependence upon him, and the full knowledge of our proceedings, which put a limit to his anxiety, were compensations lost by our reunion. He had nothing more to expect, beyond gratitude for past services which had now become useless.

He came to me the next morning when I was alone, looking changed and overwhelmed with sadness. 'My dear friend,' said he, 'now you are happy. I have wished it; I am glad of it, but your happiness costs dear to me. Live in peace with one who loves you, and whom you love. But do not ask me to be a witness of your happiness. As long as I could be of use to you, I made incredible efforts to overcome my repugnance. I would do so still, were it of any use. You want me no longer; you must allow me to visit you no more, except when

appearances or any services that I can render you may oblige me to do so.'

'Why abandon me, my dear friend,' said I. 'Do you think that anything can compensate for my loss in losing you? I would sooner renounce all other society if it be incompatible with yours.'

'No,' replied he, 'I will not deprive you of any gratification. I have sacrificed myself without reserve, to your happiness. May he on whom it is to depend, be as faithful and devoted to you as I am.'

I persisted strongly, and I induced him not to renounce my society, promising not to offend him with sights likely to distress him. I took care that he should not meet the Chevalier de Menil in my apartments when he came, which was now but seldom. He presented himself only when he had news of the outer world to report, or something to say from my friends, who often came to see him. I also met him daily at the Governor's, where we spent part of the day.

We went there to dine; after dinner I played a game of ombre with Messieurs de Pompadour and Boisdavis, while Menil advised me. Sometimes the party was differently arranged. When the game was over, we returned to our own quarters. The Chevalier de Menil followed me very closely. The company reassembled in my room before supper, for which we returned to the Governor's, and that

over, we all went to bed. I saw Menil again in the morning, and we were seldom apart.

I wished for no other freedom than that which I enjoyed. There seemed to me to be no other world than the space within our walls. It is the only happy time I ever spent in my life. Could I have believed that happiness awaited me there, and that everywhere else I should never find it?

I loved one by whom I believed myself to be truly loved. I abandoned myself fearlessly to sentiments of which the object seemed reasonable, and the goal secure. I could sooner have expected the sky to fall from heaven, than any change to take place in the heart of the Chevalier de Menil. I enjoyed that delicious peace which constitutes true happiness. Nothing was lacking but the certainty of enjoying it always; a prospect which I never questioned.

The repairs of my room being completed, I returned to my former apartments, and began to think of making them comfortable. It was enough to have passed one winter in a large ungarnished room, and the second was approaching. Monsieur de Maisonrouge, who had become even more careful of my creature comforts since he no longer concerned himself with my amusements, asked the Duc du Maine's agent for some furniture fit for my abode. He lent me some, and I took great pleasure in settling myself in my quarters under their new guise. I was particularly

delighted to find a shelf in the new mantelpiece, on which I could put a book or a snuff-box, a luxury I had not previously enjoyed. One must have wanted everything to know the value of each detail.

My messmates shared in my change of abode. It was more convenient to assemble in my room, and they came so continually and I was so often wearied and in such bad humour, that Menil reproached me severely for it, without considering the cause, which deserved great indulgence on his part.

He had long since returned to our neighbourhood. The facility of meeting, and the length of our conversations, enabled us to discuss indifferent matters. For my entertainment he showed me some ridiculous letters that he received through indirect channels, from one of his relations, who by his own confession, was still more crazy than her letters. She lived near his home in Anjou. I paid little attention to what he said of her, not imagining that I should ever have anything to do with such a person. Notwithstanding the sort of liberty allowed us, communication with the outer world was still prohibited, and the news extracted by each one of us was brought to the common fund like the plunder of brigands, and served as provender in the recesses of our den. Any rumours promising our approaching release were collected with special avidity, and for appearance sake I pretended to wish for it like the

rest, although at the bottom of my heart I was far from doing so.

The Duchesse du Maine had been taken in the first instance to the citadel of Dijon, and was dismayed to find herself in the district commanded by the Duc de Bourbon. She remained there for five months, amidst all manner of discomforts hitherto unknown to her. Unable to endure such annoyances, she implored the Princess to procure a change of quarters. She hoped that she might be brought nearer to Paris, but she was given only the choice of remaining where she was or going to the citadel of Chalons, even further off. It was a matter of deliberation. At Dijon she had established a useful correspondence with several people, who at their own peril had entirely devoted themselves to her interests. A Princess endowed with great qualities, and overwhelmed by misfortune, is a striking object, capable of touching the least sensitive hearts. She might everywhere find people animated by the same zeal and the same motives, but to make themselves known, circumstances were requisite such as do not always arise, and the same means of usefulness are not possessed alike by all. Notwithstanding these considerations, the natural craving to change a painful situation, even for one that is in no way better, and which may be worse; the longing to go when one is detained, and the opportunity of seeing the

people who were to conduct her, decided the Duchess du Maine to accept Chalons.

Orders were given to construct a dwelling for her. M. La Billiarderie, who had commanded the escort in her first journey, was ordered to go with a detachment of Guards to transfer her to her new prison, where he remained with her for several days. Her many attractive qualities, combined with the confidence with which she honoured him as soon as she had perceived the worth of his character, fascinated him completely. His feelings, concealed under the most profound respect, were perhaps unknown to himself, but reserve only added to their intensity. She received from him all the services that could be rendered by an honest man entrusted with her guardianship. He executed his duties with all the amenities that could best disguise the severity of his commission, which he never fundamentally transgressed, although he often gave it a different form.

On her arrival at Chalons, she had the sad occupation of watching her prison in process of construction, as had also been the case at Dijon, where the quarters were unendurable. The new one, which was built before her eyes, was still more uninhabitable, not only on account of the fresh plaster but from its situation, and she never occupied it. Nor, I believe, did she ever inhabit the other that she saw built at Chalons, where she did not remain

long. I did not know these things until after her return and mine, but I give them here that they may be approximately in their proper place.

Although she endured her captivity with courage, and alleviated her weariness by partaking in all the amusements that could be furnished by places so devoid of pleasures, yet her health was affected by the inevitable discomforts and anxieties that she underwent. Referring to her melancholy amusements, so different from those to which she was accustomed, she used to say, 'Let the Duke of Orleans judge of my sorrows by my pleasures.'

Narrowly as she was watched, she had found means to establish communications by which she was informed of nearly all that occurred and even of the current rumours, which were usually only a fresh source of torture. The news which prisoners are so eager to procure only serves them as poison. They learn one part, and are ignorant of the other; on this imperfect knowledge, they found a thousand theories, which give rise to a like number of chimeras and devouring anxieties. Their pleasantest condition, according to my experience, is that in which nothing reaches them.

The rumour that Monsieur de Malesieu was to be sent to the Conciergerie, tried, and treated with the full rigour of the law, reached the Duchesse du Maine, and filled her with alarm. It was afterwards said

that he would be confined at the Island of Sainte Marguerite. There was evidence in his disfavour and no goodwill towards him, so that his position was more dangerous than that of anyone else. He was also in a state of perpetual anxiety, which often gave rise to ill-digested ideas. He sent to beg me to bear witness that the King of Spain's letter, found among his papers, was a translation of the Spanish original. I told him that I should probably have no occasion to mention it, but that if I had, I could not undertake to make a statement so easily refuted.

When the Duchesse du Maine had been at Chalons about three months, the bad state of her health was represented to the Duke of Orleans, and fearing lest he might be accused of allowing her to die of a treatment too severe for a person of her position, he gave her leave to spend some time in a country house. Savigny, in Burgundy, was suggested to her as a pleasant place. She sent to ask for the loan of it from its owner, the President de . He was afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Duc de Bourbon, the governor of the province, and refused. She was told of another place called Sévigny, which was finally lent to her.

Monsieur de la Billiarderie had returned with his detachment of Guards as an escort, and took her to her new abode. Meanwhile the President who had at first refused his house, finding that the Duc de

Bourbon took quite a contrary view from what he had imagined, returned to offer it. The Duchesse du Maine did not wish to accept, but la Billiarderie urged upon her that it was wasting her resentment to entertain any rancour towards such a man, and that she would be more comfortable at Savigny. She went there, and remained for some time. At last, by dint of fresh entreaties, she was allowed to come nearer Paris, and to have as a prison-house Chanley, a handsome and pleasant dwelling only thirty leagues off. She stayed at several country houses on her way, and arrived towards the middle of the autumn. The Princesse de Condé obtained leave to visit her, and spent a fortnight with her. She was very eager to put an end to her captivity, and conjured her to confess to her honestly all that had taken place in the affair. The Duchesse du Maine gave her an exact account of the transactions, and convinced her that in all she had done, there was nothing against the King, the State, nor anything directly prejudicial to the Regent.

On this explanation, the Princess advised her to make an equally candid confession to the Regent himself, as the most certain, and perhaps the only, means of obtaining not merely her own freedom, but that of all the people concerned in the business, and who were suffering for her sake. The necessity of delivering the Duc du Maine, who, unknown to her,

had been dangerously ill in his prison, and the risk of seeing him die in captivity, innocent as he was, were the main arguments employed by the Princess and Monsieur de la Billiarderie.

Notwithstanding these powerful incentives, she always insisted on the objections to such a measure, and protested that her own interest alone would never determine her to take it, and that however urgent were the other motives presented to her, she could not make this confession without knowing whether the other persons implicated had avowed themselves, as otherwise she should risk their ruin and her own honour.

It was therefore decided that this point must be previously cleared up. It was known that Monsieur de Pompadour and the Abbé Brigaud had made ample declarations. If Monsieur de Laval and Monsieur de Malesieu had persisted in their denial, there must be no thought of an avowal which could not be made without committing them, but a petition must be presented to Parliament demanding the liberation of the Duchesse du Maine in conformity with the laws of the kingdom, which allow no one to be kept in prison beyond a definite period in which to show the cause of their detention. The Duchesse du Maine made a draft of this petition which she entrusted to the Princess.

These resolutions taken, the Princess promised

her daughter that on her return to Paris, she would ascertain positively (and she thought this would be easy) what course had been taken by the Comte de Laval and Monsieur de Malesieu, and that she or the Abbé de Maulevrier, her confidential adviser, would let her know immediately. For the safe discussion of the subject the Duchesse du Maine gave the Princess a set of commonplace phrases, to which she attached the meaning of the principal points respecting which she was to be informed. One of these phrases signified 'Laval has confessed;' another, 'he has said nothing.' The like were provided with regard to Monsieur de Malesieu.

Shortly after the departure of the Princess, the Duchesse du Maine received a letter from the Abbé de Maulevrier informing her in the covenanted cypher, that Monsieur de Laval and Monsieur de Malesieu had said nothing. Some days later she received another letter from the Abbé to tell in the same cypher exactly the contrary, namely that after holding out for a long time, Laval and Malesieu had at last confessed everything. The Duchesse du Maine did not consider this evidence sufficiently certain to determine her which course to take. La Billiarderie, who was still with her, and was passionately desirous to procure her release, being convinced that he could lend useful assistance, returned to Paris and had several interviews on the subject with

Monsieur le Blanc, who made it plain to him that she would never succeed except by making a sincere and complete avowal of the whole affair, not only on her own part but also on that of those persons who had acted in concert with her. The Regent was anxious to finish the business, but he wished to do so with honour, that is to say, he must be exonerated of having groundlessly attacked and severely handled persons of such eminence. He was hence determined to liberate neither the chiefs nor their adherents, except after an avowal on their part which would serve as an exculpation of his conduct. Monsieur le Blanc finally charged la Billiarderie to give to the Duchesse du Maine the Regent's word, that she would obtain her own entire liberty and that of all persons compromised in her affair, if she would give, in writing, an accurate and sincere account of it which should be seen by no one but himself.

La Billiarderie returned to give her a report of his commission, and brought her letters from the Princess and the Abbé Maulevrier, affirming positively, and without cypher, that the Comte de Laval and Monsieur de Malesieu had declared everything, and that the whole affair was known.

The Duchesse du Maine, convinced by this evidence, which seemed entirely above suspicion, that she could give up all persons of her party with-

out injury to any, overcame for their sake the repugnance she felt against making the declaration required of her. She made it, therefore, entirely as a proof of sincerity, in great detail. When the document was completed, it was entrusted to la Billiarderie to be conveyed to Monsieur le Blanc, after submitting it to the Princess, to whom, at the same time, she wrote a letter, informing her of the motives which had induced her to comply with the demands of the Duke of Orleans. She implored her to exact the prompt and faithful execution of his promises, and impressed upon her that this was an affair not of her interest alone, but also of her honour, which was infinitely more precious to her, and that she relied on her care and diligence, for the entire satisfaction of those who were concerned would be her sole exoneration for the step she was taking.

The Princess read over the letter and the declaration with the Abbé de Maulevrier, who told la Billiarderie that the great care shown in justifying Cardinal de Polignac and Monsieur de Malesieu might render its veracity suspicious. Neither he nor the Princess made any other criticism, and la Billiarderie took it to Monsieur le Blanc to transmit to the Regent. The order for the Duchesse du Maine's return was at once despatched and sent to her. Contrary to her expectation she found that Seaux was indicated as her place of residence. This

first infraction of the promise given led her to apprehend others.

We knew nothing in our prison of all that I have just related. We heard only a vague rumour of a termination. The report had so often reached us before, that we gave it little credence. At last, Monsieur le Blanc, who had not appeared for a long time, came to the Bastille in the last days of the year. He was alone, and first saw Pruden, the female correspondent of the Baron de Walef, who had been arrested not long before. I was next sent for to speak to him. He said that I should have saved them a great deal of trouble if, when Monsieur d'Argenson and he had spoken to me, I had told all that I knew about the Duchesse du Maine's affair, regarding which I was perfectly well informed; that she had now given a very exact account of it, and that I had no further reason for keeping the secret. I replied that they had not appeared to think me so well informed respecting it, and, in truth, they had examined me only once, and then very superficially. 'Moreover,' I added, 'if the Duchesse du Maine herself has spoken, what further information could I give you? She knows her own concerns better than anyone else. Even had she told me all the things that I do not know, I could not add to the information she has given.'

'At least, you cannot deny,' rejoined he, 'that

you transmitted letters from Spain to the Duchesse du Maine?'

I replied that the letters I might have received from Spain were addressed to me, and that I was in the habit of receiving letters from various countries in which the Duchesse du Maine had no concern.

'These,' he said, 'were from Baron de Walef, and were brought to you by a ballet dancer.'

I told him (and it was true) that I did not know what was the profession of the person who had brought me Baron de Walef's letters, but that they were for me.

Monsieur Blanc rejoined, 'But you know the whole affair, and you must speak out, or you will remain in the Bastille all your life.'

'Well, sir,' said I, 'that will be a provision for a portionless woman like me.'

'It is not a very agreeable situation,' replied he.

'Nor should I have chosen it,' said I; 'but I would rather stay here than invent fictions in order to leave it.'

'It must be confessed,' he replied, 'the Duchesse du Maine had strange confidants.'

'As to me, sir,' I continued, 'joking apart, I will only observe that if I know nothing I can tell you nothing; and if anything had been confided to me I should tell it still less.'

He could not resist saying, although it was not in his part, that the Duchesse du Maine would have been lucky, had I been her only confidant. He immediately added that her affair was finished, and that she was about to return.

'Then I am at peace,' said I.

'And as to yourself?' he rejoined.

'That,' I replied, 'is not a subject of sufficient importance to disquiet me.'

'Whence comes this assurance?' said he; 'has your horoscope been made?'

'The horoscope of a person born to such bad fortune as mine makes itself,' I replied; 'one knows that ill-luck must come, no matter how.'

Finding that I was determined only to talk nonsense, Monsieur le Blanc said that he would return with Monsieur d'Argenson, and that they would bring me written orders from the Duchesse du Maine to tell anything that was asked. I said that I should receive her commands with great respect, but that I should not tell any the more. Monsieur le Blanc left me, little satisfied with my answers, and from that time forth, although he was urged to do so in behalf of the Duchesse du Maine after her return, he declined to examine me, excusing himself by saying that it was useless, for he knew what I should say.

When I had escaped from this disagreeable conversation Menil came to see me. I recounted it to

him. I could tell him without indiscretion as much as I had told to our Commissioners, and indeed, perfect as was my trust in him, I had not thought it right to reveal to him any of the actual facts of our affair.

Some days later (it was the 5th of January, 1720) the order arrived to discharge from the Bastille all the servants of the Duchesse du Maine, grooms of the chamber, footmen, housemaids, excepting only Monsieur de Malesieu and myself. The Marquis de Pompadour and the Chevalier de Menil at the same time received their papers to leave the Bastille and go into exile, the latter at his own house in Anjou. He came to bid me a hasty farewell. I was not prepared for this sudden separation. I had still less reason to expect that I alone of all my party should be left in prison when all the rest of the Duchesse du Maine's household were quitting it, and she herself about to return. But I was so entirely occupied with Menil's departure that I scarcely heeded what concerned me personally at this crisis. He seemed but little affected at leaving me. The delight at escaping from our melancholy abode, obviously overcame his regret in leaving me there. It would have been otherwise with me had I been the first to go. This difference in our sentiments, which I had sometimes suspected, but had never so clearly perceived, was a very bitter addition to my grief. I had neither

the time nor the wish to express what was passing in my mind. He went, and I remained in that state of immobility in which the soul, overcharged with suffering, seems incapable of action.

I was roused from my lethargy to go and dine at the Control with the Marquis de Saint-Genies, the sad companion of my ill-luck. The Governor had gone on a trip to the country, not knowing what was to happen that day. We had only the King's Lieutenant, who, quite agitated with the event, and the announcement which he had to make, did not venture to utter a word. Never was a meal so lugubrious. When it was over, and when I was going upstairs, as our custom was, to drink coffee in the Governor's room, the Lieutenant stopped me at the foot of the steps, and said, 'Do not go up; you must return to your room and not leave it again.' 'Very well,' said I, and taking Mademoiselle Rondel by the arm, I returned to my own quarters. He paid the same compliment to Saint-Genies, who, I believe, took it less easily. His commission done, he followed me to my apartment. There he told me that Monsieur le Blanc, when bringing the order for liberating the others, had desired that we should be confined more closely than ever; that he had asked leave for us to dine as usual that day at least, and to allow him to inform us of this change after the repast. The poor Lieutenant was profoundly affected

by this misfortune, which I looked upon as a relief, for as I could no longer see what I liked, I was thankful to see nothing at all, and not to exhibit my low spirits lest the cause should be discovered. I should have been still more annoyed had my depression been attributed to want of courage, for one has a greater aversion to the foibles from which one is exempt, than to those to which one yields. Maisonrouge did not unravel these various emotions, and fancied that I was deeply distressed by this renewal of captivity at the time at which it ought to have terminated. He tried to discover the cause of my serenity, and asked me what I thought of the affair. 'Probably,' said I, 'they have chosen me, like the poor ass in the fable, who had stolen a parcel of hay no bigger than his tongue, and was sacrificed for the other animals who were more guilty, but stronger too.' We discussed the point for a long time without arriving at any conclusion.

In the evening the Governor came to me to assure me of his sympathy. He was extremely astonished, and said that he had never seen an instance of a case like mine, of a prisoner being shut up again after having enjoyed the sort of liberty that I had been allowed. He was yet more surprised to see me neither distressed nor alarmed at such persistent misfortune. He thought my tranquillity worthy of admiration because he did not see the miserable

prop on which it rested. Thus, we often gain credit for things which on further investigation would produce the contrary effect.

The King's Lieutenant, seeing me destitute of all society, and in a condition in every way deplorable, resumed his old attentions to me. Two days after the departure of the Chevalier de Menil, he told me that he had received a note from him, full of feeling for me. He wanted to show it to me, and could not find it. I knew him too well to suspect any trickery. The next day I received one myself, directed to me, which pleased me but little.

I passed several days without hearing any mention of the Chevalier de Menil. I spent them in making many distressing observations and reflections on his conduct. I was convinced that the open air had dissipated in a moment the feelings which I had thought so substantial; and I was bitterly grieved. At last the Lieutenant told me that Menil had been to see him, and had begged him to give me a letter, and to induce me to answer it, which I did. I received another before his departure, without the Lieutenant's knowledge, by means of his valet. In this he stated that he had had a long conversation with one of his friends, who was strongly attached to our court; that he had confided to him both his connection with me and his intentions, having thought it advantageous to enlist him in our cause,

and incline him to be of service to us with our Princess. I was extremely pleased with this transaction, which testified the genuineness of his intentions and his zeal in carrying them into execution. I was keenly grieved to have no further means of receiving tidings of him or of giving him any of myself. He was going away, and we could not venture anything by post. Our incomparable friend again came to the rescue. He felt the trouble and anxiety that this privation would cause me, and he said: 'In your position you cannot write to the Chevalier de Menil, nor he to you. Everything would be lost, were your handwriting to appear at the Post Office. But I will write to him every week. You shall see my letters and his answers, which will inform you both of each other's affairs. I felt the whole merit of this last service. The appearance of a connection with anyone just leaving his charge might cast suspicion on his fidelity, but nothing could stop him when my comfort was concerned.

In the last days of the year the Duchesse du Maine's carriage had been sent to fetch her from Chanlay. It was arranged that La Billiarderie, with the orders from the Court, was to meet them on the road and precede them. Monsieur de Sailly, Her Highness's equerry, who was in charge, took the mail-coach half-way and went to Joigny, a small town two leagues from Chanlay, to await Monsieur

de la Billiarderie, and go with him to join the Duchesse du Maine. He stayed at Joigny for two days, without making himself known; but the officers of the King's household, in attendance on Her Highness, went to the town every day to procure provisions, and seeing a man who, from the questions he asked, seemed to be interested in her fate, they apprised her of his presence. She charged them to find out who he was. He did not dare to refuse to let her know. As soon as she was informed, she sent to bid him come to her. Although he was afraid of transgressing the orders he had received from other quarters, he obeyed her commands. Yet he first sent to beg permission from Monsieur Desangles, the King's Lieutenant at the Citadel of Châlons, who had accompanied the Duchesse du Maine to Chanlay and still kept guard over her. The King's Lieutenant replied that he might go, but vaguely enjoined him to say nothing incompatible with the prudence requisite under the circumstances. De Sailly then presented himself to Her Highness. She was delighted to see him, for she looked upon him as a signal of her return. Her pleasure was disturbed, however, by the delay of La Billiarderie's appearance, which she was unable to account for.

She had been promised that, on her arrival at Seaux, she would find the Duc du Maine, her sons,

and her daughters; but when La Billiarderie was ready to set off, he heard from the Duchess of Orleans that the Duc du Maine had asked leave to go to Clagny, in the neighbourhood of Versailles, and not to Seaux, whither he had settled that his children were not to go either.

Foreseeing that the Duchesse du Maine would be in despair at this change of plans, La Billiarderie would not fetch her until he had done all in his power to induce the Duc du Maine to comply with her wishes. This negotiation retarded his journey by several days; but at last, finding himself unable to accomplish anything, he set off, determined to conceal the sorrowful tidings, fearing that she might insist on remaining where she was, unless she obtained satisfaction on this point.

Her anxiety at the non-arrival of La Billiarderie increased every instant from the time at which she had calculated that he ought to have reached Chanlay. She asked Sailly questions without end, to discover the reason. He was aware of the Duc du Maine's determination not to return with her. He took care not to tell her, but he was nearly betrayed by his confusion when she spoke of the delight of finding herself again at Seaux, with the Duke and her children. She perceived his embarrassment, and imagined the cause of it; he succeeded, however, in dissipating her fears by an

ingenious evasion. At last La Billiarderie arrived, and she was completely reassured; for, as it had been decided that she should be apprised of the true state of things only when she reached her last halt, at Petit-Bourg, he told her nothing that was not in harmony with her wishes. Monsieur d'Antin, who was to meet her there, was entrusted with the announcement. She set off, and La Billiarderie took every precaution to prevent her from knowing the fact before the time appointed, so that no delay in her return might occur to disturb the order of march. Notwithstanding the care taken to prevent anyone from speaking to her on the road, a woman-servant at Fontainebleau put her on the scent, and revealed the mystery by mentioning that the Duc du Maine was gone to Clagny. She was amazed and shocked at this announcement, which she insisted on clearing up at once. La Billiarderie was obliged to tell her everything, and was the less reluctant to do so, as she had now gone too far to draw back. Her distress was increased by hearing that the Duc du Maine's residence at Clagny was of his own choice. This arrangement, made by His Highness himself, seemed a presage of new misfortunes. Yet she continued her journey and went to Petit-Bourg, where she was met by Madame de Chambonnas, her lady-in-waiting. She discussed the present state of affairs with Monsieur d'Antin, and was led to hope

that when she was once on the spot, all would be settled to her satisfaction.

She arrived at Seaux, and found nobody there. No one was allowed to come without a special permit from the Princess, who thought right to give leave to but few. She was aware that by the desire of the Duke of Orleans, the writing which he had promised to keep secret, had been read in the full Council of Regency. Although it had been ill read, little listened to, and still less heard, it was none the less discussed and condemned. The public, who had not seen it, and who never saw it, were indignant, and blamed the Duchesse du Maine, without inquiry into the motives that had decided her on the course she had taken, and without knowing that she had been deceived by those she had least reason to distrust. It was supposed that she had betrayed people who had been devoted to her, although in truth she injured none of them, and in fact, to obtain their release, she had given herself up to the censure of the world, as might have been easily foreseen in an occasion of so much delicacy.

On hearing this public clamour, the Abbé de Maulevrier thought only of saving the Princess and himself from the suspicion of having any share in the transaction. With this object he exclaimed more loudly than anyone against the Duchesse du Maine, and he persuaded the Princess to disown her

throughout. He accused her of sacrificing Cardinal de Polignac and Monsieur de Malesieu, whom he had previously thought she defended too warmly. La Billiarderie tried to remind him of this, and of all that he had said and written to the Duchesse du Maine, in direct opposition to what he now affirmed. He denied it all, whether that he had really forgotten, or that he preferred the present interest to the truth, destitute as he believed of proof. He went to see the Duchesse du Maine at Seaux, and openly expressed his entire disapprobation of the step she had taken. At first she was, as it were, petrified with astonishment. She was in bed, and had under her pillow all his letters and those of the Princess: it was easy to confute him. She was tempted to do so, but had the courage to resist; feeling that, in her present position, it was dangerous to irritate a man who not only possessed the confidence of the Princess, who was now her only support, and that he was capable of creating an estrangement between them, were she to push him to extremity. She also felt that if he knew she had preserved these letters, he would induce the Princess to insist upon her returning them; and she could neither refuse without making a quarrel, nor give them up without depriving herself for ever of proofs whereby her conduct could be justified. A few days later the Duchesse du Maine asked and ob-

tained leave to go and see the Princess, who was indisposed and unable to come to Seaux. She was well received. The Princess took good care not to make reproaches which she felt would rebound upon herself, and the Duchesse du Maine spoke only of the necessity of hastening the execution of the Regent's promises as to the release of the prisoners, and effecting a reconciliation with the Duc du Maine.

The latter, displeased at having undergone a whole year of harsh captivity for an affair in which he had taken no part, intended to remain at Clagny, and not to see the Duchess. He had been persuaded that by displaying his resentment against her, he would give evidence of his own innocence, which it was much for his interest to establish, in order to compel the Regent to reinstate him in his offices and the rank from which he had been degraded at the Bed of Justice held immediately before his imprisonment. He was, moreover, vexed at the disorder of his affairs, and the expenses which occasioned it; and he proposed to allot a fixed sum for the maintenance of the Duchesse du Maine's household, and make arrangements to pay off his debts, and avoid contracting new ones.

This project of separation distressed the Duchesse du Maine even more than the public censure, and the desertion of the majority of those who in

the days of her prosperity had appeared so much attached to her. She therefore made every effort to reconcile the Duc du Maine, but the negotiation was long. I will relate the rest in its proper place. Not to derange the order of things, I have placed here matters which I only heard after I was restored to liberty.

While all this was taking place, and, plunged in my own sad meditation, I sat alone in my room, which I never quitted, I saw a turnkey enter, who was not the one appointed to wait on me. He handed me a large packet, and said that he should come again to fetch it, and hastily left the room. I eagerly opened the parcel, and found a letter from the Duchesse du Maine, and with it her declaration. She said that she had sent me this document that I might adapt to it any statements I might be obliged to make, with regard to which she left me full liberty. I burned the portion referring to business, and preserved only the last lines here appended :—

Fragment.

'I love and esteem you more than ever, and I am not at all surprised to hear all that you have done. Your talents and your fidelity were well known to me. As soon as I have the pleasure of seeing you again, you will receive tokens of my regard, such as you deserve. Adieu, my dear L.'

I was much affected by this letter, and by the pleasure of again beholding the handwriting of my Princess. After having perused it carefully, I set to work upon the appended document. In the midst of my studies, the King's Lieutenant suddenly entered. I threw the papers hastily into a box, and he noticed nothing save my vexation at the interruption. He was accustomed to the inequalities of my spirits, and respected them. He did not stay long, and I returned to my papers; but Rondel represented to me the danger of being surprised in the daytime, and I deferred my perusal to the night. The document was very lengthy, and it took me two nights to read it through. I wrote a letter to the Duchesse du Maine (I no longer remember what I said), and resealed the packet. I had been desired, when I had finished, to make a signal opposite to the tower inhabited by Monsieur de Malesieu, as an intimation that it might now be called for. This was done. The same paper had been sent to him in the first instance, with orders to forward it to me. I was mentioned in it, only in passing, with reference to a subject of small importance, regarding the Dame du Puys, whom I have mentioned elsewhere; but all that concerned Monsieur de Malesieu was treated in full, in hopes of exculpating him as far as possible by the remonstrances that the Duchesse du Maine asserted that

he had made to her, and the authority she had been obliged to employ in order to extract from him the writing that had been discovered. The delay of his release put her in despair. She made such strenuous efforts with the Regent to obtain his liberation that at last she succeeded about three weeks after her return; but she could not shield him from exile. He was sent to Estampes, where he remained six months.

She also pleaded with the Regent for the Comte de Laval and for me. He told her that we were both suspected of having participated in the affair of Brittany, which at that time occupied much attention, and that this point must be cleared up before we could be set free. She protested that in my case this was impossible; that I had never done, or been able to do, anything except by her orders, and there was no doubt that she had taken no part in that affair. It is true that Baron de Walef, finding himself ill at ease, and in want of employment, had entered into this intrigue expecting to render it a source of profit. He had carried on a correspondence with the insurgent Bretons, and employed the same woman whom he had put in communication with me, whence it was inferred that I might have some knowledge of the new transactions to which she lent her aid. This conviction was so strong, that there was some thought of transferring me to the

Castle of Nantes. I received notice of this project, and I was the more alarmed as a few days before, the Comte de Noyou had been removed by night from the Bastille to be taken to Nantes, and this so suddenly that he had not been able to take with him any of his effects. I pictured myself, thus destitute, posting along the high roads, only to arrive at another prison, where the jailors might be more barbarous than those I had so successfully tamed. I escaped with the fear, for without taking me so far it was ascertained that I had no share in the affair of Brittany.

In order to evade releasing me, the Regent declared that I must speak as the rest had done ; that he had imposed this condition, and that he would not be foiled by the absurd heroism on which I prided myself. Monsieur de Torpanne, who was known to me as an officer in the Duc du Maine's household, was sent to persuade me to submit. It was supposed that I should not distrust him. He was allowed to come into my room, where I had not hitherto seen anyone from the outer world. He told me that he came from the Duchesse du Maine to release me from all my promises to keep her secrets ; that she had been obliged to reveal them herself, and that she freed me from any reserve in this respect. I replied that I had made no promises, that I did not know what he meant, that Her Highness was at

liberty to give an account of her own affairs, and that she could do it much better than I, who did not know so much, and did not recollect enough of what I might have known, to say anything on the subject. He went away without having heard anything more to the purpose.

On this occasion and others similar, Mademoiselle Rondel, with a courage beyond her station, exhorted me not to allow myself to be seduced by the efforts made to persuade me to speak. 'The conduct you have hitherto maintained has done you honour,' she used to say; 'believe me, you ought to adhere to it. How can it injure you? The affair is over. To remain here a little longer is all you have to fear. What does it matter. We are accustomed to it.' I have always thought it admirable that a servant, who gained nothing by the honour of her mistress, should feel such delicacy and so readily sacrifice her own freedom.

Shortly after this visit from Torpanne, the Governor came with a message from Monsieur le Blanc, to say that he required a declaration from me. I told him that I did not know what a declaration was; that I had seen them only in novels, and that it could scarcely be one of that description that Monsieur le Blanc demanded of me, but that I would write to inquire more particularly what he

wanted, and begged that he would kindly take charge of my letter. The next day I gave him the following :—

Letter.

'Monsieur,—The Governor of the Bastille yesterday ordered me, in your name, to write a declaration. As I am not aware what subject it is to treat, unless you have the kindness to indicate the point on which you desire me to give information, I shall be unable to comply with this command.

'If my ignorance of the faults I have committed is not considered sufficient justification, at least it renders me unable to confess them. Monsieur de Torpanne, whom I have seen by your permission, assured me that the Duchesse du Maine has given very ample information of the matters in which she is concerned. If there should be any details on which you desire further elucidation from me, I beg you will have the kindness to point them out. I shall have the honour of replying with the exactitude due to the regard for truth, and the persons who demand it from me. I have the honour to be, etc.'

These negotiations led me to believe my liberation near. As it seemed likely that the Regent would not consent to my returning at once to the

Duchesse du Maine, and as I moreover knew that the Princess de Condé had set her face against it, I thought it prudent to secure a refuge of which I might at any moment stand in need. The taste for solitude which I had acquired in my enforced retreat, and the vexations I had experienced in the world, led me to look with pleasure to a residence in a convent. A convent was, in fact, my home, and I had always wished to return to one. I wished especially to go to the Presentation, where Madame de Grieu still lived, and where I had made my first abode after leaving the provinces. I communicated my desire to Maisonrouge, and he induced the Marquise du Châtelet, to whom he was much attached, to write to her sister, Madame de Richelieu, the Abbess of the Presentation, who replied :—

'Although I do not take boarders, my dear sister, I long ago endeavoured to arrange that Mademoiselle de L—— should be entrusted to my charge. But such a proceeding was then considered useless to her, and dangerous for me. You may imagine how readily I should receive her now, should she leave the Bastille. More than one motive would incline me to do so, and one of the strongest would be the interest taken in her affairs by your obliging Major. He first took zealous charge of her for your sake, but afterwards for his own. It would be right to receive her from his

hands. I should wish him to feel indebted to me for my goodwill, as I feel indebted to him for all that he has done. You have good reason, my dear sister, to extol his zeal and attention to my brother. I am much touched by it; make my gratitude known to him, and give him my compliments.'

Soon after this little negotiation, I was informed that the Duchesse du Maine urgently insisted on having me with her again as soon as I was released, and my plans became very uncertain; those most interesting to me depended on the return and the dispositions of the Chevalier de Menil. Faithful to his word, Maisonrouge wrote to him every week, and received letters from him equally often, which he did not fail to show me, as well as his own. They were very measured on both sides, owing to the risk of interception which they incurred.

Menil had spent three months and a half in his exile when he gave us notice of his return, and he followed close upon the announcement. As soon as he arrived he came to see our King's Lieutenant, and asked him many questions concerning me, and begging him at the same time to give me a letter, which pleased me but little. It treated mainly of the necessity of obtaining my release from prison. His style struck me as changed, and I suspected the same change in his feelings and intentions. All that Maisonrouge reported of his conversation, all

that I saw he suppressed, his doleful look as he made his narration, one and all concurred in alarming me. Then I reassured myself again by the same indications that had given rise to my anxiety. Could the sadness of a rival testify the infidelity of the favoured lover? Would it not much rather have caused him a pleasure that he would have been unable to conceal. 'It is certainty of his own misfortune, not of mine, that distresses him.' So said I to myself to calm my fears, and a thousand replies renewed my agitation.

During the remainder of my captivity, he wrote me several letters, nearly all of which kept me in a state of uncertainty and distress, which I concealed as far as possible in my answers.

The Duchesse du Maine, who during the five months since her return had been labouring to procure my release, now begged her niece, the Princess de Conti, from whom she received many tokens of affection, to persuade Monsieur le Blanc to see me once more, and put an end to my affair. The Princess spoke to him, but could only obtain permission to send me Monsieur Bochet, Military Secretary to the Prince de Conti, charged with the commands of the Duchesse du Maine. She refused to write them with her own hands, but employed a secretary whose writing was known to me, and who was not under suspicion, and sent me a card, which

I have preserved, inscribed with the following words: *The Duchesse du Maine commands you to write, and I am desired to tell you so from her.*

Monsieur Bochet came to the Bastille, gave me this card, and intimated that it would give dissatisfaction to all parties if I offered any further resistance, and that I must therefore comply with this final command. I obeyed, but without piquing myself on my sincerity; I told only the things that no one cared to know, and others that they would have preferred not to hear. This document was accompanied by a letter to Monsieur le Blanc.

I believe that the Regent was not much pleased with my confession, but as he only wanted the seeming execution of the condition attached to our liberation, he put up with it, and no mention was made of its existence, so that the public was never aware that I had made one.

A few days later, being at my window, I saw the King's Lieutenant hastily crossing the yard with a paper in his hand, which he held up to me. He entered my room in a state of excitement that surprised me. None but those painters who have been able to combine the expression of joy with that of acute misery, can describe what I saw depicted in his face as he handed me the paper that he held. It was the order for my release from the Bastille. 'You are free,' he said, 'and I lose you. I have

ardently wished for this moment; I would have offered my life to hasten it. But I shall see you no more, and what will become of me?'

I felt nothing but confused emotion; joy, if there, did not make itself apparent. I regretted a friend whose affection, as I saw only too well, was entirely unique. I longed anxiously to see the Chevalier de Menil again, and to clear my suspicions; and perhaps I feared it no less. Lastly I wished to be again with the Duchesse du Maine, and I dreaded the troubles and fatigues into which I should relapse. Every feeling was neutralised by the almost equal force of a contrary feeling.

With my freedom I received an order to repair at once to Seaux, where the Duchesse du Maine was then staying. I sent to the Temple to beg the Abbé de Chaulieu to lend his coach to take me first to his own house, and then to Seaux. He was already very ill with the complaint of which he died only three weeks later. I saw him, and I noticed how indifferent we feel in that state, to all that is useless to us. He had taken great interest in my captivity, but did not appear at all affected by my release. I keenly felt my impending loss of a friend who seemed to have made it his duty to confer pleasure on my existence as far as circumstances allowed. Others have since been occupied with my interest and advantage, but no one ever renewed his amiable

offices in my behalf. I was unable to remain with the Abbé as long as I should have wished, for I was obliged to continue my journey without delay.

It was evening when I reached Seaux. The Duchesse du Maine was out driving. I went to meet her in the garden; she saw me, stopped her carriage, and said, 'Ah! there is Mademoiselle de L——, I am very glad to see you again.' I went to her, and she embraced me and continued her drive, while I returned to the house. I was taken to the room she had appointed for me. I was delighted to find that it had a window and a fireplace, and to hear that she had two new dressers; one to replace the chief one, who was dead, and the other to occupy the situation from which I had been removed. The Duchesse du Maine had sent me word that she wanted to have Mademoiselle Rondel, of whom she had heard much praise, for her needlewoman. Hers had died in prison. I willingly made the sacrifice, hoping that it would lead to something better, and I took her younger sister. They both became dressers to Her Highness twenty years later.

There was scarcely any one at Seaux when I returned. The Duchesse d'Estrées had gone there as soon as she could obtain permission. The Duchesse du Maine was still allowed to see but very few people. She used to play at Biribi with her household half the night, and slept during the

greater part of the day. I had to sit up and read as before. I was quite unaccustomed to it, and these fatiguing habits soon made me regret the repose of my prison. The Duchesse du Maine talked to me of hers, and told me all that had happened to her, of which I knew nothing. She talked a great deal and questioned me little. She showed me the Princess's letters, and those of the Abbé de Maulevrier, of which I have already spoken.

A few days after my return I asked leave to make an excursion to Paris to fetch a number of things which I had left at the Bastille, having taken with me only the articles I absolutely required. I was very impatient to see my real friends again, and especially to speak to the Chevalier de Menil, to whom I had announced this expedition in the following note.

Note.

'At last I can speak to you if nothing should occur to prevent it. I hope to be at the Presentation on Monday morning, and there we will discuss many matters of which my mind and heart are full. Meanwhile, as nothing is certain, I will say what can be said; not what I think of my present situation, or you would consider me demented. It is the effect of the night watches that I have kept ever since I came here. At any rate, I have never been in a sadder

mood, and if I do not find elsewhere the consolation that I need, I fear that I shall play traitor to myself.'

Two days later I went to Madame de Grieu at the Presentation, and she nearly died of joy at seeing me again. In her parlour I found the Chevalier de Menil, who, instead of similar delight, showed only an air of embarrassment. I myself felt crushed by his countenance, from which I augured an entire change of feeling.

He talked of the bad state of his affairs, occasioned by the general confusion consequent on the sale of a house, with which I saw he had parted unnecessarily in order to buy a life annuity. His fancy for this sort of property clearly showed that his own interest had always been his only object. The veil, sometimes more and sometimes less thick, which had hitherto covered my eyes, fell altogether, and I saw the abyss into which I had plunged by plighting myself so lightly on vain illusions. To deprive them of all further hold upon me I enquired what had become of his old plans. He said that he wished for their execution as much as ever; that he was far from abandoning them, but that time was required to see what turn his affairs would take; that meanwhile he should make the journey which he had already mentioned in his letters, namely, a visit to his old and intimate friend the Marquise d'Avaray, Ambassadress in Switzerland. This he seemed to think

quite indispensable. However strong may have been his wish to see her, he wished still more to get away from me. But revolted as I was at his behaviour, I did not wish him to go without speaking to me once more. I told him that I should be two days at Paris with my most intimate friend, Madame de Réal, the niece of Madame de Grieu, and that he would find me on the following evening if he would come to her house.

I then went to call on my friends, from whom I probably received a better welcome. I remember nothing of it, so entirely had the sorrow that pierced my soul rendered it unsusceptible of any other impression. I went to the Bastille, for that was the object of my journey. I saw the King's Lieutenant and found him depressed and ill. I have lost all memory of what passed between us ; I do not even know whether we had any private conversation. I know only that I gave him a little writing that I had sketched out in prison, and which he had urgently begged to have. I had added to it a sort of dedicatory epistle.

I do not know how I spent the rest of the day. On the morrow I received a visit from Monsieur de Silly at the house of Madame de Réal. He expressed great pleasure at seeing me again, and much satisfaction at my conduct. I went out, and came in early. Madame de Réal was gone to the opera. I

had refused either to go with her, or to allow her to stay at home to keep me company. I promised myself a more interesting occupation. So I waited, and I waited in vain, for the Chevalier de Menil, who never came. It is mainly the impression of that cruel evening that obliterated from my memory all that preceded and followed it. I have never passed any time in my life that could bear comparison with those hours. I saw that Menil's infidelity was confirmed, and that he even dispensed with any measure of civility or decorum, and to put a climax to my despair, I perceived also that, perfidious as he was, I could not detach myself from him.

Madame de Réal returned and found me in a state in which she had never seen me before, though we had passed our lives together in the greatest intimacy. She insisted on knowing the cause of such violent distress. I confessed it to her, and related my whole adventure. It was some consolation to pour out my heart to a soul so tender and true. She was an extremely amiable woman, free from all pretension, gentle, sensible, very clever, without being aware of it, and very charming without a thought of pleasing.

Although my conversation with her had soothed me a little, I spent the night in a state of agitation, unalleviated by a moment's slumber. At daybreak

I wrote to the Chevalier de Menil. He came to Madame de Réal's house before my departure. His failure on the previous evening had been owing only to a mistake. He was told at the door that I was out. In short, he was not guilty of that wrong, but so many other causes of complaint remained that I was none the better pleased with him, as I made known to him in my letters after I returned to Seaux.

At the same time I received one from Madame de Vauvray, saying that the little leisure I had ever had for dressing and ascertaining the fashions justified her in sending me a pattern. The letter was accompanied by a case containing the apparel of a woman from head to foot, with all the appurtenances of the toilet, the whole in the best taste possible. I was much touched by this delicate attention at a moment that rendered it so appropriate. Everything I had had in prison was worn out by lapse of time, and I had left the Bastille, as it were, in rags. Thus I was dressed by the kindness of a friend, whose generosity I could acknowledge only by my grateful recollection.

I found myself very well received after my release from prison. My humble share in an affair so sensational gave me a sort of lustre. My appropriate behaviour attracted more approbation than I really deserved for the little it had cost me. But our

actions cannot be appreciated by their unknown intrinsic value, and the position which brings them to the light fixes their value. My old friends, gratified by this sort of success, warmed towards me again. Many people who did not know me before wished to make my acquaintance now, and I should have had many gratifications if the unfortunate poison which saturated my soul had not rendered it impenetrable to all satisfaction.

The Duchesse du Maine was still in very great trouble, and I found it easier to sympathise in her distress than it would have been to share in her pleasures. Many people had deserted her for fear of displeasing the Regent, with whom, notwithstanding the apparent reconciliation, she was not supposed to be on good terms. She saw very few people. Cardinal de Polignac and Monsieur de Malesieu were still in exile. But what distressed her beyond everything was that the Duc du Maine persisted in staying at Clagny, and refused to see her. He made her an offer of fixing a sum for the expenses of her household, and leaving its administration to herself. These ideas of separation were hateful to her, and she would not listen to anything that tended that way. On the contrary she did everything in her power to conciliate him, and induced not only the Princess to remonstrate with him, but also everyone else who had access to him, even Madame de Cham-

bonnas, whom she instructed so well that she spoke quite eloquently. At last, to attack him on the side of his conscience, she employed Cardinal de Noailles. Pressed on all quarters, the Duc du Maine could not refuse at least one interview, which took place at Vaugirard at the house of Landais, the Secretary-General of Artillery. The Duc du Maine went there, and the Princess de Condé brought the Duchess to meet him. She employed many blandishments, which had not as much effect on the mind of the Duc du Maine as she had anticipated. If his grievance against her had been real, his resistance would not have been so long, but a predetermined resentment can be overcome only by reasons that prove its uselessness. He was finally convinced, and he surrendered.

He returned to Seaux, and lived there much as usual, although still occupied with the precautions which he considered it prudent to observe. Hence Malesieu was not allowed to come back to him after his return from exile, but remained with his family at Chatenay, an outlying portion of the barony of Seaux, conferred on himself and his posterity by the Duc du Maine. The Duchesse du Maine bore his absence with impatience, and made amends for it by perpetual intercourse in writing.

Madame de Malesieu, his wife, had followed him into exile, and remained with him after his return.

She was governess to Mademoiselle du Maine, who was left at the convent of Chaillot until everything had returned to its accustomed order.

Cardinal de Polignac, in his Abbey of Anchin, no less intimidated than the Duc du Maine, did not venture to have the slightest communication with the Duchess. She was, nevertheless, extremely anxious to justify her conduct in his eyes. She took advantage of a journey which Madame de Chambonnas' son made to Flanders to write him a letter, and send a copy of her declaration. He was afraid even to look at these papers, and handed them over to a confidential adviser, who assured him that he might read them with impunity. Although the perusal of this document might have assured him of the Duchesse du Maine's caution, and ought to have rendered him grateful to her, a needless alarm led him to refuse all intercourse with her, and even on his return he paid her a mere visit of ceremony. So cautious was he rendered by chastisement, that he would not even attend the marriage of the Marquis de Chambonnas with Mademoiselle de Ligne, to which he was invited as a relation, because it was held at the Duchesse du Maine's quarters at the Arsenal, and she was to be present.

Some time afterwards, the death of the Pope having summoned him to Rome, he came to take leave of her, and seemed in a more friendly mood.

He assured her at parting that she would often hear from him, and that on his return he should resume the demeanour of a true friend, which he had suspended only to obviate the displeasure of the Regent. Notwithstanding these fine speeches, fear retained the upper hand, and nothing more was heard of him.

The Duchesse du Maine gradually recovered her full liberty. The people who had left her, willingly or by compulsion, now came back. Malesieu returned to Seaux. She saw anyone she pleased, and went to Paris when she chose, and stayed there as long as she liked. The Duc du Maine had been reinstated in his offices, and no trace was left of their troubles, save the degradation of his rank and that of his children, and which was restored to them only under the administration of Cardinal Fleury. Before proceeding to that time, if I ever reach it, I return to the course of my own affairs.

Soon after leaving the Bastille I lost my mother. She had long been in a convent, overwhelmed with suffering, and ill at ease. Although I scarcely knew her, I regretted her deeply, and all the more that I was beginning to be in a position to give her more effectual assistance than heretofore.

Previous to my imprisonment Monsieur de Valincourt had introduced me to Monsieur and Madame Dacier. He had even included me in a banqnet which he gave to reconcile 'the ancients and the

moderns.' La Motte, at the head of the latter, having been violently attacked by Madame Dacier, had replied politely but forcibly. Their warfare, which had long been the amusement of the public, was terminated by the intervention of their common friend, Monsieur de Valincourt. After making peace between them, he held a formal celebration of it at this meeting, to which the leaders of both parties were convoked. I represented 'Neutrality.' Homer's health was drunk, and all went off well.

Monsieur and Madame Dacier took great interest in my captivity, and gave me as many proofs of their sympathy as they were able. They were equally interested in my deliverance, and although in great distress at the dangerous illness of his wife, Monsieur Dacier wrote me a letter in her name and his own, expressing the greatest esteem and the most tender concern in all my affairs. He soon after lost this celebrated wife who was so perfectly suited to him. His grief was of such a kind as to make one conscious how impossible it was to repair his loss. I knew its full extent, and assured him in a letter how deeply I felt for him. His answer gave proof of his affliction and of his gratitude for my sympathy. I wrote to him six weeks later in the name of the Duchesse du Maine, and in his reply I perceived the same depth of feeling as in the first hours of his misfortune. I

compassionated him sincerely, and then I thought no more about it.

About a year afterwards the Duchesse de la Ferté, whose friendship had been revived by my imprisonment, said to me on returning from Versailles, 'I found that poor Dacier with Maréchal de Villeroi; it is sad to see him. He says that he is as miserable as he was the first day, and is ready to die of despair. "Well," said I, "there is but one way of consoling yourself; you must marry again." "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "what woman is capable of replacing the one whom I have lost?" "Mademoiselle de L——," said I. He was struck with surprise, and after a moment's thought he replied, "She is the only woman in the world with whom I could live, and who would not be an insult to the memory of Madame Dacier." The Marshal and I, seeing him shaken, pressed the proposal, and quite inclined him to listen to it. I am determined that he shall marry you; he is a man of celebrity and has some fortune; you will replace an illustrious woman; the marriage will be both honourable and useful.' I felt the truth of what she said, and expressed my gratitude for the care she was still kind enough to take in my concerns. She assured me that she should prosecute this business, and would carry it out successfully. Distractions intervened, however; the Duchess went into the country, and the idea was forgotten. I

mentioned her suggestion to Monsieur de Valincourt, who thought it promising, and took more consistent measures for rendering it effective. He was a friend of Monsieur Dacier's, and he easily induced him to confide to him the speech he had made to the Duchesse de la Ferté. He confessed that the suggestion, though lightly thrown out, had made a deep impression upon him, and that from that moment he had thought only of the means of persuading me to consent to his views. Monsieur de Valincourt undertook to speak to me on the subject, and to let him know my inclinations.

The unconquerable love of liberty and repose had long made me desire anything that would procure me the enjoyment of both. Monsieur de Valincourt was charged with a favourable answer, dependent nevertheless on the consent of their Highnesses.

Delighted with such a propitious commencement, Monsieur Dacier joyfully accepted Monsieur de Valincourt's offer to give a dinner to us both the first time that I came to Paris. This was done a short time afterwards. We had a long conversation, in which he expressed his readiness to do everything he could to my advantage, and left me nothing to do but to obtain the assent of my masters.

Although I had none of Madame Dacier's merit, the hope of living again with a person worthy of

his esteem, inflamed Monsieur Dacier with a sort of passion for me more ardent than I deemed suitable to his age and the state in which he was. The more insupportable he found his grief and the misery resulting from it, the more necessary in his eyes appeared the solace that was presented. He therefore eagerly wished to conclude the proposed engagement, and spared no pains to succeed. He brought Monsieur de Valincourt a memorandum of his possessions, the whole of which he proposed to settle on me, and showed that the property I should receive would amount to twenty-five thousand dollars, without counting his apartments at the Louvre, and a portion of his pensions which it was thought might easily be secured to me. The Duchesse de la Ferté, who had taken up the affair again on her return, had spoken on this point to Madame de Ventadour, to the Bishop of Fréjus, at that time tutor to the king, and to Maréchal de Villeroi, who had promised to obtain this favour as a means of facilitating an arrangement of which they approved.

The only impediment remaining was the consent of the Duchesse du Maine, and this was the most difficult. At the first suggestion she objected strongly, said that I was necessary to her, and that she could not sanction a marriage that would take me away from her. Advantageous as it was, I would not accept against her will, and could scarcely

have done so with propriety, nor without being shut out from all reward for my long service. I asked for time to win her over by degrees, and to reconcile her to the separation for which I shared her repugnance. For other reasons also, I felt considerable aversion to this new engagement, and I was glad to elude an arrangement which was too good to refuse and yet not sufficiently attractive to induce me to hasten its conclusion.

Angry as I was with the Chevalier de Menil, the feelings I had had for him, although hidden at the bottom of my heart, still agitated me in secret and counteracted my best interests. The new affection he had taken during his exile in Anjou for one of his relations, whom I have already mentioned with the small respect that she deserved, only assured me of his frivolity without exciting my jealousy. Notwithstanding the grief it caused me, and which, in spite of all my efforts, I was unable to conceal from him, the fact of his journey to Switzerland, just after my release from prison, and his sojourn there for seven or eight months, convinced me of his indifference towards me. His return, followed by another journey to Anjou, as much for the sake of avoiding me as to see my unworthy rival; his coldness and embarrassment when I saw him in the interval between the two journeys, coupled with the avowal of his change of feeling which I demanded and received,

and the complete resignation on his part of all claims upon me, certainly gave me the right to dispose of myself without his consent, and yet had not rendered it possible to do so. I could not therefore resist sounding his feelings on the first proposals made to me of a new engagement. I wrote to him in Anjou where he then was.

His answer was like those mysterious oracles of which the various interpretations adapt themselves to one's wishes. I saw in it a certain regret at losing me, some distant hope of renewing the old projects; the whole wrapped in a generous preference of my interests above any other object, and in short more feeling than had been shown for a long time. And perhaps there was some truth in it; nothing is so indifferent to us that we do not try to catch it again as it escapes our grasp.

On her return from prison and before I had left mine, the Duchesse du Maine had heard of my connection with the Chevalier de Menil and his supposed intentions. She alluded to the subject in a careless manner after my return, and I was mortified to see how little she was inclined to favour the project. She forbid me to see him at her house, on the pretext of his proscription, and appeared to have no consideration for my wishes in this respect. It was easy to see that she was only desirous to keep me with her. But when she heard of Monsieur Dacier's

proposals, she seemed inclined to favour my old schemes. She said that she had wished for their success; that circumstances had not allowed her to assist in them; that she was obliged to use great circumspection, but that if I preferred the old projects to those now offered, she should not be wanting either in the will or the means of following them up, and that she should be the more ready to do so, as this marriage would remove me less from her, and seemed to her moreover far more agreeable for me than the one in question. She did not stop at these generalities, she entered into details; said that good places in the Duc du Maine's household might become vacant, which could be perfectly well filled by the Chevalier de Menil, and would not only supplement the deficiency of his own fortune, but would likewise remove all pretexts for eluding his engagements to me.

Had I been led only by my own lights, feeble as they may be, I should easily have discovered the snare. But feelings which are always blind made me give in to it. Shaken as I was, I did not yield at once. Deference to the counsels of my friends still supported me. Monsieur de Valincourt and Madame de Réal constantly represented the substantial advantages of my alliance with Monsieur Dacier; the wealth and the independence that I should acquire, at least prospectively; and they urged me to

conclude the marriage. It is quite true that Madame de Lambert, who was quite of the *modern* faction, perhaps from aversion to a leader of the opposite party, depicted the life that I should lead with Monsieur Dacier as dreary in the extreme.

'What will you do,' she used to say, 'with a man all bristling with Greek? and what will he think of you who do not know a word of it?'

Meanwhile he was employing various people to beg their Highnesses to give their consent. Madame de Chiverney who was a friend of his, begged the Duchess of Orleans to speak to the Duchesse du Maine. The Prince de Conti, with whom he had some influence, also spoke in his behalf. So many measures employed in vain, divulged the affair, and made it public. It was generally approved; every one offered congratulations not only to me but also to the Duchesse du Maine, who received them anything but agreeably.

I used to see Monsieur Dacier from time to time, at the houses of Monsieur de Valincourt and of Madame de Réal; he frequently wrote to me and became more and more attached to me. In one of our many conversations he showed an eagerness which made me draw back. I felt the inconvenience of finding in a husband an amount of affection to which it is impossible to respond. I had been to Paris; and I returned to Seaux with my mind full of

this idea. The Duchesse du Maine unconsciously profited by it, for she had a conversation with me on the subject, in which I was thrown off my guard. She opened it by the most affectionate speeches, exaggerated her indispensable need of me, and the grief she should feel were I to leave her, and finished by saying, 'You can certainly have no unconquerable affection for Monsieur Dacier; it is only a question of fortune. What are the advantages he offers you?' I recounted them. 'That is not much,' said she. 'I can and will do much more for you, if you will make me this sacrifice. Now what would you like?'

'Madame,' I replied; 'I have given myself to you, and I will not sell myself. Your Highness may dispose of me as you please.' 'Then think no more of this affair,' she rejoined, 'and I will undertake to make life pleasant to you.'

And indeed she increased the comforts she had already given me, included me in her excursions and her parties of pleasure, and put me very nearly on an equality with the ladies of her household.

Monsieur de Valincourt was much vexed that I had yielded so easily and without securing anything. I thought that my sacrifice would be all the more appreciated. But I ought to have known that the distractions of pleasure, or attention to more important

objects, prevent Princes from remembering these smaller matters.

My eager friend tried to persuade me that my speech to the Duchesse du Maine was a mere compliment, and wished still to prosecute the affair. But Monsieur Dacier, who from the commencement had been suffering under a serious illness, was not in a condition to respond to his views, and now in his turn asked for a delay. I went to visit him at his own apartments. He left the Academy, where he chanced to be at the moment, and came to join me. He mounted the stairs quickly, and could scarcely speak when he reached the top. The complaint in his throat almost suffocated him. He nevertheless expressed a great desire for our marriage, and a strong hope of accomplishing it. Although he struck me as being in a precarious condition, I was extremely shocked to hear of his death two days after this visit.

The Duchesse du Maine was a little disconcerted at the intelligence, and signified her regret at having prevented me from availing myself of the fortune he wished to settle upon me. The regard and friendship he had testified for me, made me regret him still more than the slight remaining hope of renewing my engagement. I had ample time to feel the irreparable mistake I had made in missing such a good opportunity of securing repose and freedom.

The Chevalier de Menil, having returned from his second journey, was more distant to me than ever. The few attentions he paid were so wearisome to him, that I begged him to dispense with them. He offered but little resistance, and we saw one another only when we met by chance, at the house of his relation and friend Madame de Menon, with whom I had made acquaintance, and for whom I felt great regard and affection.

His other relation from Anjou (a very different person from Madame de Menon) came to Paris. He gave her apartments in his house, and was so devoted to her that it became generally known. He wanted me to see her; perhaps he thought it would be his justification, for I do not believe that he wished to gain credit by the sacrifice he had made of me. At any rate he induced her to make advances to me, to which I thought it well to respond, that I might not appear to behave differently to her than to others. Perhaps also I was not sorry to inspect the rock which had caused my shipwreck. She wrote to me and asked me to dine with Monsieur de Menil to meet Monsieur de Fontenelle and others of my friends when I happened to come to Paris. I went; I saw her; I thought her (as she was) tall and well-made, not handsome, and still less pretty, rustic in mind and manners; and the others saw her in the same light. It was my best consolation to know the

true worth of the affection I had valued so highly, and I henceforth thought only of obliterating this melancholy recollection. Among the distractions that offered themselves, the one which occupied my mind the most, came from the side of Monsieur de Silly. I have already said that he hastened to see me on my release from the Bastille. The sort of glory I had acquired there was not indifferent to him. He sought me out when I came to Paris, and was more friendly with me than he had ever been since we left the country. He was at that time extremely occupied with a great passion he had conceived for a person more distinguished by her rank than by her beauty. Fascinated mainly by his opinion of her merits, he had persuaded himself that she would have been incapable of weakness for anyone but himself. This victory gained over a virtue which he had rarely encountered, endued his feelings with more ardour than would have been produced by other charms to which he was more accustomed. He daily embellished this work of his imagination with the features that could best adorn it. But the more flattering the illusions, the more acutely painful is their destruction. He perceived or fancied that this woman, whose only object he imagined to be himself, had cast her eyes on others. Unable to endure the agony of this discovery, he confided it to me, as well as the whole adventure. This confidence displeased

me. Yet I saw with satisfaction that he was ignorant of the interest I might have taken in it. He asked my advice. I told him that I was willing to listen to the recital of his troubles and causes of anxiety, because I was interested in him ; but that my way of thinking allowed me to do no more in his behalf ; and that I was moreover ill-suited in every way to such affairs, and was surprised that he should wish me to take part in them. He entreated me, by all the friendship I had ever shown him, at least to hear him. I consented ; and it was no small undertaking, for he had so many things to say which all resulted in nothing, and when he had said them, he repeated them so often that I admired my own patience in listening to him. He was not contented with talking to me ; he wrote me volumes. I could not doubt that he was violently in love. Yet he resolved to sacrifice his love to his vanity, which he held to be outraged. He imparted this design to me. I told him to consider it well, and when I saw he was sufficiently decided, I became more amiable in giving advice, considering that ruptures were more within my scope than love affairs. He wished to commence this one by a letter of which he urgently besought me to give him a draft, as his mind was too much agitated to allow him to write anything coherent. The tranquillity of mine was no smaller obstacle in finding the proper thing to say. Still the desire to give him pleasure,

and perhaps (although without pretensions of my own) the wish to detach him from a person whom I should have liked him not to care for, enabled me to compose a letter with which he was satisfied. He copied it out, and sent it to the lady, who was exasperated by it, and begged urgently to see him. He would not consent. Fresh difficulties arose how to frame his refusal, and fresh entreaties to me to supply him with the document. This one produced another. I had embarked in the correspondence, and was obliged to go on to the end. A lady of great position in the world was in the confidence, and had connived at the intrigue, as she pretended, in order to save the character of her friend, and give her the protection of her own reputation.

Monsieur de Silly, who was very intimate with her, had seized on the moment of her absence to break with her protégée. The latter wrote to tell her disaster to their common friend, who addressed a furious letter to the faithless lover. He sent it to me, and wanted me to answer it. All this took place at Seaux, where I received messengers from him every day, and missives without end. Nothing has made me so fully aware of the invincible power that a first inclination had preserved over me, than the satisfaction with which I followed the whole course of this affair.

The confidante returned from the country. I

was intimate with her. She knew my connection with Monsieur de Silly, and complained to me of his conduct, assuring me that he had only deceived the person in whom she was interested. I told her that I had reason to believe entirely the reverse. 'Oh,' said she, 'if you had seen the letters he has written to her, you would be convinced that he never had the slightest feeling for her.' And in truth they did not proceed from a heart much affected, but neither was it he who had written them!

Still, the deserted mistress being unable to obtain the interview that she asked for, and knowing that we had made a party to dine with her friend and ours at a country house near Paris, went there also. I was extremely surprised at this encounter, and more still when, without pretext or concealment, she carried off Monsieur de Silly into the garden after dinner, and kept him there so long that the time having come when I was bound to return to Seaux, whither he had promised to take me, I was obliged to send him word. Still he did not come. I imparted my trouble to the mistress of the house. She was more annoyed than I was at my being the spectator of a scene so ridiculous, enacted at her house, and of which she knew what my opinion would be. Finding that messages were useless, she went with me herself to look for them in the garden, and to break off the conversation. We

found them still highly excited; not by love, but by more violent passions. The woman was half dishevelled, and looked not unlike a fury. Her lover preserved a cold calmness full of resentment.

He took me home, and told me that he had not been convinced by anything that she had said; that she had refused to submit to the conditions he exacted from her as a guarantee against fresh suspicions, and that he was more confirmed than ever in his original determination. And, indeed, he resisted all attacks, and did not renew his intercourse with her; but he remained so occupied about her that he wrote to tell me of all her doings, and added long commentaries upon them. Some of her proceedings affronted him, and in his wrath he made, for the first time in his life, some very stinging verses against her, which he sent to me, with an intimation that he intended to spread them. I opposed this step so strongly that he yielded to my arguments. He long continued to talk and write to me on this subject. I was interested by his ingenuous descriptions of the various feelings of his heart. I listened to him, and answered him as long as he had anything to say.

He kept the letters that I wrote to him about this affair, and nearly all that he had had from me since my imprisonment. He had taken measures to have them returned to me, with many other papers,

in case I should survive him. They were faithfully restored to me after the tragic event of his death.

The remainder of my life, long as it has been, contains scarcely anything that it interests me to relate. I had no further communication with the Chevalier de Menil. At one time I entertained some thoughts of rewarding the faithful attachment of Maisonrouge, and linking my fate with his, but these ideas were disconcerted by his death. A decline, which seized him shortly after our separation, obliged him in the following year to take the air and waters of his native country, where he died. I regretted far more than I had appreciated him.

I now found myself destitute of all aim or object in life. This lack of feeling cast me into a kind of annihilation worse than the entire cessation of existence. I took a disgust to it and a horror for the world. I only wished to seclude myself from society. Monsieur de Valincourt, always my friend, but whose extreme piety kept him continually in a state of retreat, not only approved of the project of retirement which I confided to him, but endeavoured to procure me the means of carrying it into execution. For this purpose he asked for a small pension for me, and obtained it. But as the negotiation was prolonged, the obstacles that intervened suspended my plan. The Duchesse du Maine fell dangerously ill, and her recovery was slow. She

showed me great confidence and affection on this occasion, while I on my side did everything that could be done, and I did not know how to announce my design. I thought that time might produce some more fitting opportunity. While this idea was still floating in my mind, the Chevalier de G., who had professed an attachment for me long before my sojourn at the Bastille, and to whom on my return I had confided the more serious engagements that I had taken, mentioned to me his belief that a man who had belonged to our household before I had joined it, was now touched by feelings for me stronger than those of ordinary esteem. He said that he had heard him speak in terms that admitted of no question.

Although we lived in the same place, we had no communication. His haughty temper rendered him unsociable. I made no advances, and we scarcely ever spoke to each other. Yet I had a high opinion of him. He inspired a conviction of his scrupulous and delicate probity. His courage in risking displeasure by speaking the truth; his freedom from flattery, virtues as rare in small courts as in great ones; all this, combined with noble sentiments and a high reputation in his profession, that of a military man, had earned my esteem. Although I regarded as a dream what had been told me of his preference for me, I never-

theless paid increased attention to him. Curiosity to ascertain the truth, weariness of my own idleness, the natural disposition to care for something when one cares for nothing; all these motives, so well concealed in the recesses of my heart as to be unsuspected even by myself, led me to show him some civility, and to avail myself of the opportunities of talking to him, which he soon took measures to create by repairing to the places where he was likely to meet me. It was in the summer, and we were at Seaux. I was in the habit of walking every evening in a garden below the windows of the house. He used to join me there so regularly, that no day passed without our having a long conversation. The first time that he failed, I felt a disturbance such as I no longer know. I began to dread the horrors of a new love. Naturally disposed and by long habit accustomed to form attachments, I had not the fortitude to dispense with this kind of support; but now I know that such props, unsteady in themselves, are apt to fall on those who rest upon them, and do not fail to crush them. The conflict between convictions founded on experience and the inclination which carried me away, threw me into a state of violent perturbation. I determined to stifle at its birth the feeling that alarmed me; but I found it possessed more strength than I supposed, and it even acquired more from my efforts to

suppress it. In trying to avoid the object of my fear, I established the idea in my mind in such a manner that it became a fixture, comparable only to the one idea which persecutes us without intermission in brain fever. I made this comparison, and drew from it the most melancholy prognostics.

The precaution of flying only caused a closer pursuit, and what I said to break off all intercourse gave indications of my feelings. The heart never fails to betray the reason, whatever lessons it may have received. This discovery produced greater zeal in the attentions shown me; vanity came into play, and assumed the semblance of true feeling. As usually happens, I was deceived; my bonds became stronger, and I felt more than ever the necessity of breaking them. The character and position of the person in question did not justify this new passion. It tyranised over me without vanquishing me, embittered me against myself, and caused me nothing but vexation.

Madame de Réal came to see me in the height of my despair. Fully as I trusted her, I wished to conceal a weakness which was rendered unpardonable by the number of my friends and the sad experiences I had undergone. She noticed my distress, and urged me to reveal its cause. I answered only by my tears, and they put her on the scent. 'I see,' said she, 'that you find yourself weary of

your indifference, and have taken some fancy of which your reason disapproves. Tell me for whom it is?' She named a very charming young prince. 'Alas! no,' said I; 'my inclinations are very eccentric. I am apt to love people who are not pleasing.' And in truth the man to whom I was attached was not attractive. He had made some brilliant conquests, but the vanity which they occasioned combined with that which was natural to him, and added to a sharp and buoyant temper, made even his virtues scarcely supportable. I finished my confidence to Madame de Réal, and told her that if I were to die of it, I was determined to root out of my heart feelings that could lead to nothing suitable, and would constitute the shame and misery of my life.

My resolution was firm, but the execution was difficult, in a place where I was besieged by the individual I wished to avoid, and who, aware of my weakness, was so well able to triumph over it. I thought it essential, therefore, to quit this person's neighbourhood, and to make a veritable retreat. But how, and under what pretext, could I announce it to my Princess? How face her indignation and reproaches without having any apparent reasons to allege? To escape so many difficulties, it occurred to me to seek refuge at the Carmelites, without giving any hint of my design. I found that, shut in

there, I could resist all attacks under secure ramparts, that could not be forced.

The Comtesse de Brassac, who belonged to our household, and was a friend of mine, had an apartment at this convent, where she spent some portion of her time. I went to see her in her parlour, and begged her to introduce me to some of her friends among the nuns, whom she had frequently mentioned as clever women. I talked to three or four of them, and found them very pleasant. I counted on their society as a help in braving the austerity of their life, and this confirmed me in my resolution. I imparted the plan to Madame de Brassac; her great piety led her to approve of it, although she knew how strongly the Duchesse du Maine would resent her connivance. A few days afterwards, I put myself into a coach belonging to our household, which was going to fetch her to spend the evening. I went as if to receive her at the convent-door, and on seeing it open, I entered, and told her that I meant to stay, begging her to inform the Duchesse du Maine that, having taken this resolution, I had not had the courage either to declare it to her, or to resist the efforts she might have made to dissuade me.

The Prioress and some of the nuns who had accompanied Madame de Brassac to the door were present. My proceeding was as great a surprise to

them as to her, for no one had expected me to carry out this plan so soon. After recovering from the first astonishment, they enquired whether I had reflected sufficiently on the step I was taking. I said that I thought so, and that I believed too much self-examination might only weaken the resolution. I entreated them to receive me that moment, for I could not answer for being similarly disposed at any other. This reply led them to doubt whether my vocation was certain. The Prioress, a sensible and enlightened woman, said that she thought it more fitting that I should consider further; that if I were really called to that state, meditation could only add force to the motive, and that if it deterred me, it was better that I should meditate now rather than too late. I urgently insisted, but the Prioress was firm, the other nuns and Madame de Brassac coincided with her, and all agreed that I must wait. So I returned with Madame de Brassac, who was doubtful whether she had been right or wrong. I reminded the Prioress that to wait was to break it off entirely. I felt I was too weak to be at all times capable of such an effort.

I thought, however, that this exploit, although a failure, would intimidate the person who had caused me to make it. I informed him of the risk I had run, that he might no more expose me to it; he was impressed, and withdrew. This pained

me; he perceived it, and made fresh approaches, while I made new plans of complete seclusion.

We had at Seaux at that time Madame du Deffand. She made advances to me with a charm that was irresistible. No one has more wit, or of a kind more natural. The speaking fire by which she is animated penetrates to the bottom of every subject, makes it stand out, and gives relief to simple outlines. She possesses in a supreme degree the talent of pourtraying characters, and her portraits, more living than the originals, make us better acquainted with them than the most familiar intercourse.

I passed several years in the painful hesitations I have described, without being for a moment at peace with myself. During that time I lost the friends most dear to me, especially the Marquis de Silly, by a terrible death of which I will not renew the recollection. A year later died Madame de Réal, who was my greatest consolation. Her aunt, Madame de Grieu, who had brought up both of us, followed her closely to the grave. I lost also Monsieur de Valincourt, the only real friend left to me. I found myself isolated on all sides. These ties, which still attached me to the world, being broken, I took a disgust to it, which, joined to some mortifications which I received from my Princess, inclined me more strongly than ever to a

complete retreat; not to the Carmelites, whose austerity of life seemed beyond my strength, and perhaps beyond my zeal also.

I had some thoughts of returning to Saint Louis at Rouen. The affection that one preserves for the places in which one has passed one's youth, gave me a great preference for this convent. I talked of it to Madame de Bussy, a right-minded woman, with whom I had become extremely intimate since I had lost Madame de Réal; she possessed my entire confidence, and saw that I had no other means of escaping from the trammels which made the misery of my life. She thought it well that I should make a trial of the step I intended to take.

I informed the Duchesse du Maine of my desire to revisit the place in which I had passed the greater part of my life, and begged her with urgent entreaties to give me leave to spend some time there. She resisted the suggestion; nevertheless by dint of perseverance I obtained her consent, but it was only by promising on oath to return. She suspected that this journey might cover an intention of retiring, and wanted to make me come to an explanation on this point. I admitted that I had a taste for solitude, and that I had always wished to finish my life where I had begun it. She required fresh vows in renunciation of this project.

I would promise nothing more than to return from the journey I was about to take.

I set off with the pleasure generally experienced after overcoming great difficulties, even in matters of small moment. Those that I had experienced with my Princess were not the only ones. The man whom I wished to avoid used every means to detain me except the right one. Not being acquainted with the Abbess, I had negotiated with her through one of my friends among the nuns, to whom I had written several letters on my present intentions, and those that I might form in the future. I was received at the convent with transports of delight, such as nuns alone are capable of. They had preserved a far more lively remembrance of me than I had of them. Their excessive affection was burdensome to me. The Abbess took a fancy to me, and wished me to be constantly with her. I had gone there to be my own mistress; I found myself more at the mercy of others than in the midst of the world, where we find the same passions and the same motives which agitate great courts, at play in these small monarchical states, the same springs are seen to act with less skill, and for purposes which add repugnance to the weariness of intrigue. I found there anything but the solitary and peaceful existence to which my wishes inclined. I thought that a place in which I should

not be known would be more in harmony with my views, and I abandoned the design of settling myself in my old home. I stayed about six weeks, and then returned to Seaux to redeem my promise. I was not very well received. The trial of liberty that I had made had been displeasing, yet fearing that I should at last break the ties which bound me to her, the Duchesse du Maine wished to draw them closer. She first argued against my notions of retirement, endeavoured to discover my reasons, and gave me an opportunity of alleging the difficulties and vexations to which I was constantly exposed by the ambiguous situation I occupied. The distinctions conferred upon me since my release from the title and functions of a dresser, had no precise limits. I scarcely ever knew whether I was within or without the bounds. However little I overstepped these limits, either unconsciously or by her Highness's own commands, I was disagreeably reminded of my position by the looks and murmurs of her ladies, who never forgot the distance between themselves and me. These annoyances I offered as an excuse for the contemplated measure, for although they were not my real motives, they were more likely to make an impression than any others. She said that a remedy existed; that I might be married to a man of position, who would put me on a level with all the ladies of the Court; that

the Duc du Maine's offices enabled him to make many people's fortune; it would be easy to find some official under his command who, to obtain promotion would agree to such a marriage, and that she should look out for a person who would realise her views in this respect, and who would suit me likewise. I thought the discovery would not be easy, and that I should have time and opportunity of evading it if the match did not prove sufficiently advantageous, while, if it were, it would be better for me than my present position, as the necessity of dividing my duties would procure me some degree of liberty, and that I should find such an engagement a barrier against my own weaknesses as good as the walls of a convent. Hence, far from opposing the kind intentions of the Duchesse du Maine, I expressed my gratitude to her for taking charge of my fortunes.

Some opportunities of marrying had offered themselves since I missed Monsieur Dacier, but various drawbacks that I noticed had prevented me from accepting them. Among others, a man who had long known me during the lifetime of his wife, with whom I was extremely intimate, shortly after her death was induced by motives of pure regard to offer to share his fortune with me. It had been once very large as far as money was concerned, but his affairs were then in such a dilapi-

dated condition that I could not make up my mind to enter a labyrinth from which no exit could be seen.

I was also the object of another passion long after I had given up such ideas, and at an age at which one is not apt to inspire them. A man from the provinces, whom I saw by chance, imagined from his slight acquaintance that a person established in a court, favoured by a princess, had it at will to make the fortune of anyone she chose. He had long been occupied in financial affairs, and aspired to a high place in that line. This man looked upon me in the light of a powerful patron, and as a person whom he might induce to serve him by good offers on his side. At first he said nothing, but soon after he indited me a long and well-written letter, in which he set forth his views, the place he desired, his claims, his means of attaining it, and his intention of acknowledging my services by a considerable sum or annuity, which I was at liberty to confer on whom I would. I informed him in my answer that I had no patronage, and still less wish to sell it if I had it, for any price whatever. Indeed, in the cases in which I might have been best able to succeed, I have always regarded such proposals with the contempt they deserve.

The frankness and upright feeling which charac-

terised my letter, greatly impressed the person to whom it was addressed. He replied, and changed the offer he had made into that of himself, if his fortune could be rendered sufficient to make it acceptable, or even as it was, if he might venture to lay it at my feet. I replied with the same candour, showing that he could expect no addition to his fortune from me, and that being unable to contribute, it would be unbecoming to accept a share. He made new entreaties, accompanied by a detailed account of his possessions, the value of his offices, the provision he could make for me, and the great hopes he entertained both from an enterprise in which he had taken part, and from the assistance of powerful patrons. I saw that he offered me sufficient wealth to deserve attention. I perceived in him great probity, mother wit without affectation or culture, noble and virtuous feelings, and so much regard for myself that I could not help being grateful to him, but further I did not go.

He came to Paris and remained for several days. He saw me and expressed the most respectful attachment and the strongest desire to link his fate with mine. I gave him to understand that in my position, and at my time of life, I should not be forgiven for changing my condition except for a fortune that would appear extremely advantageous, and in

fact that I resembled those antiquities which rise in price according to their age.

He explained to me the enterprise in which he had engaged the greater part of his possessions. He promised himself enormous profits, and thought success was certain. I took a different view, and cautiously avoided making any engagement on such ambiguous appearances. In truth the affair failed and he became deeply involved, other misfortunes followed, and his ruin was complete. I was the more affected by it as I thought that I had aggravated his misery, by the despair which he evinced at having nothing to offer me. I regretted not being in a position to repair his misfortunes and to reward his generous feelings either by marrying him, or by some other means. I had not even the satisfaction of being able to do anything in his behalf on several occasions when he suggested that I might be of service to him.

Other matches were offered which did not suit me. One was a man tolerably rich, but in a humble position, who lived in a very retired manner in Paris, and wanted a sensible wife to keep him company. Not being acquainted with him, I doubted whether I should be satisfied with this. It was necessary to decide without investigation, and I refused.

A friend of mine suggested another alternative. This was a gentleman of about fifty years of age, who

had recently left the army, and lived in the country on a nice estate, and in a house that was well built and well furnished. This individual I saw at the house of the person who had proposed the match. He had rather a fine figure and good manners, and he found me less decrepit than he expected. Satisfied moreover with the small fortune that I possessed (for the friends I had lost had left me tokens of their regard) he told his friend that he was ready to conclude the arrangement provided I had no objection to spend my life in his country house.

On this proposal I consulted Madame de Bussy, to whom I had confided all the other offers I had received, and she alone knew the motives that induced me to listen to them. As to this one I wrote to her (for she was away), that it was tantamount to throwing myself out of a window, but that I had long contemplated doing so. She replied that this window seemed to be on the tenth floor, and that she should at least wish me to throw myself from a smaller height. She represented that to shut myself up with a person whom I did not know, and who was perhaps incapable of appreciating me, and still more of pleasing me, was the very means of conducing to the literal execution of the figure of speech under which I had represented this match, and that she could not approve of it unless he consented that I should divide my time between Paris

and his country house. I followed this advice, and sent word to the individual in question, that being so much attached as I was to the Duchesse du Maine, I could not make up my mind to leave her altogether, nor to make an engagement to which she would never consent on such conditions. He replied that if I wished to preserve other ties than those I should make with him, I should not suit him. This answer convinced me that he would not suit me either, and I broke off the negotiation.

The Duchesse du Maine knew nothing of all these abortive projects. However, she had charged Madame de Sur . . . , the wife of a Swiss officer, a friend of mine and much attached to her, to look out in the Helvetic Corps, commanded by the Duc du Maine, for some one who would take a wife without birth or fortune, beauty or youth. The thirteen cantons would hardly have sufficed for such a discovery, and the lady took a long time to make it. I had almost forgotten her mission, when one day, having come to Seaux, she said, 'I believe I have found, quite by chance, the very man we were looking for. When taking a walk the other day, I went with Monsieur de Sur . . . to call upon an officer, a fellow-countryman of his who lives near the place at which I was staying. I found a small mansion, quite new and clean, surrounded with herds of cows and flocks of sheep. The master of the house, although not young,

charmed me by his pleasing countenance. He is a man of position, a widower, and he lives in this retreat with two of his daughters. They appear gentle and sensible, and are entirely occupied with the cares of their household. Although he has served long and done his duty well, he has gained but little promotion, because he kept himself in the background, and merit which does not assert itself is rarely discovered, but,' added she,' I think that a little patronage that would procure him his due without any trouble to himself, would be highly acceptable, and if the Duchesse du Maine thinks fit that I should speak to him, I have no doubt from the enquiries that I have made, that the proposal would be well received on his part, and that it would be a most suitable arrangement for you. He is well born, and has lived in the world without adopting its vices. He owns a small property which he cultivates, about two leagues from Paris. Adding to this the value of the Duc du Maine's patronage, you would both be in good circumstances.'

While she was saying this, there arose before my mind a picture of rural life, in which the contrast with my own existence gave relief to every object, and led me to admire its sweet and innocent delight. I was at that time drinking milk, and nothing seemed more charming than to have cows at hand. Human pride conceals from us the paltry circum-

stances which have assisted in forming our decisions even on occasions of the greatest importance, and it is only by an exact and difficult research that we are able to discover them. Thus I was at once seized with enthusiasm for the new sort of life that I thought of leading.

I consented that the Duchesse du Maine should be informed of the project communicated to me. She approved of it, and it was decided that without mentioning my name, the arrangement should be suggested to Monsieur de S——. Madame de Sur . . . had a friend who was better acquainted with him than herself, and she was entrusted with the negotiation. The proposal was well received, yet Monsieur de S—— asked for some days' consideration before giving a positive reply. He lived with his daughters, with whose conduct he was perfectly satisfied, and he wished to obtain their acceptance of a step-mother, a title which is always odious. Being mistresses in their own cottage, and accustomed to manage the house, they feared lest I should take the control and assume authority, which is an object of jealousy alike in the field and in the court. My small capacity and taste for such pursuits rendered them quite safe, but they knew nothing of me. They yielded, however, to the wishes of their father, who foresaw a certain and easy fortune in the offer made to him. He wisely

insisted on assigning a definite object to the general promises offered him. He was only lieutenant of a company in the Guards, of which the captain, suffering from apoplexy, had long been incapacitated from service. He asked to fill his place when rendered vacant by his death, which could not be far distant, and as a preliminary he demanded the title of Captain of the Company, which he had in fact commanded ever since the illness of the titulary officer. He promised to conclude the suggested marriage as soon as he should have received this first favour as an assured pledge of the rest, for which he was willing to wait.

This was the epitome of his answer. The Duchesse du Maine approved, and endeavoured to induce the Duke to consent to her views. She explained to him all the reasons which made my marriage desirable, and put them in that favourable light which she is able to throw on anything on which her mind is set. But with his usual skill in eluding what he had not the courage to dispute, he applauded her design in general, and suggested other people, whose consent was doubtful, and whose suitability was still more questionable. The Duchesse du Maine would take no refusal. Accustomed to his evasions, she hunted him down until she caught him. This was a lengthy process, during which it was considered fitting to show me to

Monsieur de S——, and take me to see him. The interview took place at the house of Madame de Sur . . . . He was better pleased with me than there was any reason to hope. I framed no opinion of him on this first meeting, but some time afterwards I went to his country house with Monsieur and Madame de Sur . . ., and dined there. The locality, the repast, and the company—all recalled the simplicity of the golden age. The house was small and clean, and was rendered cheerful by the whiteness of its walls; the scantiness of the furniture struck me as becoming. Since that time I have felt less appreciation for this style of ornament. The table was spread with the poultry of the farm-yard, the meat of the herds, the fruits of the orchard. Our young hostesses, as if in times when Jupiter had again become hospitable, prepared some of the dishes, and regaled us with cakes and cheeses made and served by their own hands. It was agreeable to contemplate this mode of life, so much in harmony with the nature from which we had become estranged, and I thought that it would suit me. I was pleased with the master of the house, with his manner and a certain unstudied politeness which comes from the heart, and betokens a gentle and kindly temper. And this is his indeed. His nature, exempt from passion, tends instinctively to what is good, without check or deviation of any kind. The

result of this unalterable calm is a perfect evenness of temper, healthy opinions not obscured by any mental disturbances, more precision than profusion of ideas, little conversation, but that little sensible; in short a person whose society cannot be disagreeable, and is as incapable of causing animation as of giving annoyance. I had a confused feeling of all this, which I unravelled in the course of time, and I found a man whom Nature had placed in a position which unaided reason could never have reached.

We had a conversation after dinner, in which we discussed the affair in question. Monsieur de S—— signified that he wished it extremely, yet adhered firmly to his resolve of not concluding the bargain until he was invested with the desired title. I approved of this wise precaution, and we parted well pleased with one another. When I was seated in the coach he placed at my feet the fattest lamb of his flock, and begged me to take it away with me. This pastoral gallantry was quite in keeping with all the rest.

I gave the Duchesse du Maine an account of our successful expedition. She always requires the prompt execution of any project that she has in hand, and the postponement of this one was unpleasant to her. The Duc du Maine, whom she pressed for the fulfilment of the condition exacted, raised fresh difficulties. It had to be deferred until

some event should give occasion to the transaction, and no such event took place. Meanwhile I discovered that the estate supposed to belong to Monsieur de S—— was, in fact, the property of his children, and that he could afford me no other advantage than that of marrying a man of position, a point useful indeed with regard to my situation at Court, but in other respects perfectly indifferent to me. We went to Anet, and other thoughts effaced the recollection of this affair. I took care not to revive it. It seemed so moderately advantageous that I wished it to be entirely forgotten; for I was meanwhile growing older, and the project of marrying was becoming more and more ridiculous. I was in this frame of mind when, after our return from Anet towards the beginning of winter, the Duc du Maine said to the Duchesse, 'The Chevalier de Molondin has had a fresh attack of apoplexy, and I seized the opportunity of naming Monsieur de S—— the captain of his company; it is done.' This was the only condition he had required for finishing the affair. The Duchesse du Maine sent for me to apprise me of the news, which delighted her and overwhelmed me. What I had liked at a distance changed its appearance on nearer approach. I saw in a single moment all the objections which had hitherto concealed themselves from my sight. I was amazed at my blindness, and, at the same time, I

felt the impossibility of drawing back after the step that had been taken, and I fell into a sort of despair. Mental agitation, or some other cause, made me ill. I looked upon death as the only issue left, but this melancholy expedient failed me. I recovered, and I was obliged to submit to the yoke which I had allowed to be imposed upon me. We went to Paris, and I saw Madame de Bussy ; she approved of the arrangement, and tried to encourage me, but I should have preferred, at least, to defer it. I made vain endeavours to obtain a delay until after the campaign which Monsieur de S—— was about to make. I hoped that some accident might release me from my engagement. Her Highness said that the Duc du Maine had taken action, the public was already talking, and an end must be made to the affair. As a last attempt I represented to her that, having no other duty than that which attached me to her, I was quite disposed to restrict myself to that single engagement, but that if I were to contract a new one, I should wish also to fulfil new obligations which might be incompatible with my devotion to her. I begged her to reflect before anything was done, that I might not afterwards be torn to pieces by conflicting duties. She replied that she had quite foreseen that I should be obliged to divide my time between her and my husband ; that I should spend part of it with him and the rest with her. I begged that if it were any

loss to her she would not make the sacrifice for a marriage which I should give up without regret. She was inflexible, and listened to me so little that she would never after remember either the remonstrance that I had made to her, or her own consent to the division of my duties.

The contract was made, in which the annuity granted me by the Duc du Maine since my imprisonment was secured to me. The Duchesse du Maine gave me some clothes. The victim, bound and adorned, was led to the altar by Madame de Chambonnas, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse du Maine, and afterwards reconducted to Her Highness, who welcomed and embraced me with transports of joy. I was next taken to the Duc du Maine, to whom I repeated these words of a psalm, '*Suscitans a terra inopinam*,' and, I may add, said I, '*qui habitare facit sterilem in domo*,' etc. He gave great assurances of his protection, and we did not expect to lose him so soon.

All these ceremonies having been accomplished we got into the carriage, the party being Monsieur and Madame de Sur . . ., Monsieur de S——, and myself, and went to dine at his house at Gennevilliers, where I had leave to remain for some days. I stopped on the way to see Madame de Bussy, who was already very ill; she had for some time led a very lingering existence. Notwithstanding her condition,

she was delighted to see me. She gave me a beautiful snuff-box, and all manner of tokens of tender affection. I left her with a heavy heart, and only saw her again when she was dying; this sorrow which I took with me, contributed not a little to render my new abode distasteful. My step-daughters, who had apparently flattered themselves that the affair would not come to a conclusion, were vexed to see me arrive, and disappeared, instead of coming to receive me. They had refused to attend the ceremony, which had already warned me of their disposition. By dint of exhortations the eldest was at last induced to show herself, and when she came, it was with very bad grace. I pretended not to notice it, and by making great advances I tried to overcome her ill-humour, which ultimately gave way. The youngest daughter appeared at the end of dinner with some lame excuses for not coming sooner, and matters, although still not very satisfactory, took a better turn. Monsieur de S—— was much vexed at my ungracious reception, while I felt quite surprised to find myself married; the embarrassment spread through the house, and the company was also infected by it. The party was composed, besides those whom I have named, of several intimate friends who had followed us.

On the morrow of this melancholy day, being anxious about the health of Madame de Bussy, I

wished to hear tidings of her, and as the means of doing so were not supplied with sufficient promptness I went to my room and burst into tears. One of our guests came to see me; it was the person who had first suggested the project of our marriage to Monsieur de S—— He was much distressed to find me in this state of desolation, which was compounded of several causes. I excused my distress by various pretexts, and determined to conceal it as well as I could. However, Monsieur and Madame de Sur . . . and their friends went away, and I felt still more uncomfortable when I found myself alone in this house which I ought to have regarded as my own. Monsieur de S——, on his part, did all he could to make my residence agreeable, but the first impression could not be so rapidly obliterated. I remained there several days longer, and then went with him to Paris to await the return of the Duchesse du Maine, who had been spending the carnival at Seaux.

She soon returned, and expressed much pleasure in seeing me in my new capacity. I enjoyed all the privileges of the ladies of her household, a place at her own table, and a seat in her carriage. Nevertheless, on an occasion that presented itself, I felt her reluctance to let me be seen in such close proximity in the full blaze of day. It was the time when the King holds the review of the Swiss Guards.

The Duc du Maine told her that she must attend, and treat me to this sight. She went, and sent me in another carriage with Madame de Sur . . ., while in her own she took Madame de Bess . . ., who was better known at Court; whence I perceived that, unlike baptism, the sacrament of marriage does not efface the stain of original sin.

This discovery was followed by another, which was a still greater disappointment. Monsieur de S—— had gone home to spend Lent, towards the end of which he sent me word that he was to start for the campaign immediately after Easter, and that he begged me to come and pass the Holy Week in his house at Gennevilliers. I proposed this arrangement to the Duchesse du Maine. She listened with surprise mingled with indignation, and not content with a positive refusal she made it the subject of bitter complaints, and accused me of the blackest ingratitude and the most iniquitous behaviour, as if I had totally failed in my duty to her because I wished to perform some part of my duty to the husband she had given me. I tried in vain to make her remember the explanation that I had previously had with her on this subject; it was all forgotten, and was abruptly denied. I now saw that I had only tightened the chains that I had endeavoured to slacken. I was the more exasperated by a refusal which foretold so many others, as I had

ardently wished for this interval of freedom to share it with Madame de Bussy, who was then at the last extremity. I went to Seaux to spend the week which I had intended to pass elsewhere. There I learnt the death of my friend. This was the climax of my distress. The tokens of affection conferred upon me in her will, only served to justify my regret. She left me a pretty country house, which had been her delight, and a diamond which she wore upon her finger. These pledges of her affection will ever be precious to me, and the tender memory of such a true friend will always be as present to my mind as it is deeply graven on my heart.

I never knew any woman so perfectly sensible, and whose sense, moreover, had so little bitterness. Hers was the most tender heart, and the best regulated mind that ever existed. Everything about her, even to her thoughts, was emotion, but emotion in perfect harmony with the purest knowledge. Exact veracity, scrupulous justice, inviolable fidelity, tender and benevolent humanity, made their dwelling place in her heart; they were instinctive, and maintained themselves without an effort. A vivifying warmth, which imparts grace to everything, even to defects, adorned her virtues, and gained her as much affection as esteem. But the quality which above all others rendered her beloved by her friends was that true and perfect friendship which is so often

said to be only a vain idea. She was trusted as one trusts oneself; and one could readily have told her things that it was difficult to own to one's own soul; the kind interest that she manifested, and her eager attention to all that was said, made its way to the bottom of the heart, and penetrated its most secret recesses. The wisdom of her counsels, and her manner of making them welcome, rendered it useful as well as delightful to confide in her.

The irreparable loss of such a friend, joined to my other vexations, cast me into a state of despondency which completed my disgrace. I made an expedition to Anet, in which I experienced nothing but mortifications. The only gratification I derived from it was a passing glimpse on my homeward journey, at the pleasant hermitage that had been left to me, and which was not far from the road we took. I was not able to stay more than half-an-hour, but this glance gave me a great wish to take up my abode in this peaceful retreat. Fresh misfortunes traversed my design. The Duc du Maine, who had hitherto enjoyed perfect health, was attacked by an illness which at first appeared of no importance, but was soon pronounced incurable. The Duchesse du Maine, agitated by the keenest anxiety, revived my full attachment to her. The care and attention demanded by her husband's state kept her for a whole year at Seaux in agonising suspense, during

which, undaunted by the horrors of a fearful malady, she faithfully fulfilled all the duties of a wife. She was about to lose the mainstay of her family, a Prince who, notwithstanding his fall, had, from his own merit, and the general habit of regarding him with respect, succeeded in preserving a high position both in the world and at Court; one who, by the invincible ascendancy of her mind over his was entirely subject to her will, whence she derived great power without forfeiting the advantage of complete liberty.

After untold sufferings, the cancer in his face deprived him successively of all the functions of life, and ultimately of life itself. His death was as Christian as it was painful. For me it entailed the loss of all those hopes of fortune by which I had been fascinated, but these had a smaller share in my regret than the worthy man I so much respected.

The Duc du Maine had an enlightened mind, acute and well-cultivated; he possessed all the customary requirements, especially a superior knowledge of the world, and his character was peculiarly noble and serious. Religion, perhaps, rather than nature had implanted in him all the virtues and rendered him constant in their exercise. Although possessing all the endowments most attractive in society, he entered it with reluctance, yet when there, he was invariably lively, good-humoured, affable, and

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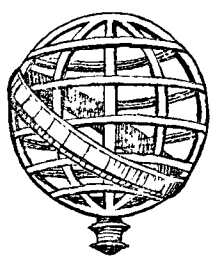

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